# A WARNING TO THE HINDUS

... make both those Hindus who are not nationalists, and those Indian nationalists who do not care to call themselves Hindus, into Hindu nationalists —

SAVITRI DEVI

# A WARNING TO THE HINDUS

Foreword by

Sree G.D. Savarkar

Savitri Devi

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*Dedicated to*
*Divine Julian*
*Emperor of the Greeks and Romans*

*May future India make his impossible*
*dream a living reality, from*
*one ocean to the other*

# Contents

# Foreword

Thought-currents are the makers and unmakers of nations and peoples. Regenerating, invigorating, enabling and aspiring ones raise them while degenerating, emasculating and self-deluding ones bring ruination upon them.

In all walks of life, for a very long time, the Hindus have been fed on inertia-producing thoughts which disabled them to act energetically for any purpose, in life, other than "moksha," that is to say escape from this world—where to? God knows. And this is one of the causes of the continuous enslavement of our Hindu Rashtra, for centuries altogether.

Inspite of this state of things, time and again the undying vitality of Hindu manhood has asserted itself so vigorously as to make the enemies of Hindudom tremble before its "Nrisingha" nature. But it was *inspite of* the extraordinarily heavy pressure of the most unhealthy mental apathy towards worldly things that this outburst of the manly spirit was witnessed.

This unworldly mental attitude of the Hindu mind kept the nation from being conscious of its Hindu nationhood.

In the meantime, circumstances forced the Hindus to think in terms of nationhood, but, unfortunately, instead of the right one, they conceived a perverted idea of

nationality. They tried to forget their collective self in order to bring foreign elements within the orbit of what they considered to be the "nation"—a strange "nation" indeed, in which men of foreign culture and foreign interests are given the upper hand, while the true children of the soil (faithful to its civilisation), are being reduced to helotry. And thus the Hindus encouraged the foreign elements, namely the Moslems, to foster the anti-national ambition of establishing their supremacy in India, either allied to the British or of their own.

As a result, the very existence of the Hindus as a nation has been increasingly threatened. Day by day, the situation is becoming more and more serious, and a time is almost at hand when, it is feared, it will be quite an impossible thing to think of the Hindu nation being saved. Anyhow, an herculean effort is needed to save it, and the first and most important step towards such an effort is to produce an extraordinarily forceful thought-current through the collective Hindu mind; a thought-current which will, inspite of their still apathetic mental condition, create, among the Hindus, the positively assertive attitude of Hindu nationalism.

With the knowledge of this diagnosis, a few people have come forth who are doing their best to enable the once glorious and now unfortunate Hindu nation to come out of these critical times victoriously. And the authoress of this little book may safely be given due credit for producing the most necessary thought-current and thus, for rendering the most urgent service to this Hindu nation of ours.

She has one advantage over the usual workers from within the Hindu fold. She was Greek by nationality. It is owing partly to her appreciation of Hindu art, thought

and "dharma," and partly to deeper reasons that she was drawn to our society and that she adopted what we call "Hindutwa" for the rest of her life. But naturally, being a European, she could, though from within, study the condition of the Hindus in a detached manner. And this book contains the mature and thoughtful conclusions drawn by her, conclusions which, in no case, can be taken as the outcome of that partial attitude which one of the born-Hindus may be said to possess.

This highly inspiring and thought-provoking book will make the Hindus realise where they stand, and what dangers are threatening their very existence as a nation; it will put them on the right turn of national thinking. And this new attitude, if whole-heartedly adopted throughout the length and breadth of this country, will raise them, and help them to assert their national existence which the world shall not be able to ignore.

After this much, I introduce this book to the Hindu readers, and take leave of them hoping to be excused for having stood in the way between them and its valuable contents.

G.D. Savarkar

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Sree G.D. Savarkar has given a translation of this book in Marathi language.

# Preface

These pages were written after a year and a half work with the Hindu Mission (headquarters: Kalighat, Calcutta) in Bengal and Assam. They express a very old national outlook on religion, in the light of recent personal experiences. The Hindus who have a long and continuous experience among their countrymen, both in the social and political field, are humbly requested not to take offence of any such statements of a junior worker, which may seem premature to them.

The last chapter of the book, concerning the Hindu militia and the cultivation of the art of self-defence among the Hindus, reflects mainly the ideas preached by Srimat Swami Satyananda, the President of the Hindu Mission, and given by him a beginning of application in Assam, with the collaboration of the physical trainer and leader of the Hindu volunteers in Shillong. These same ideas are at the back of the vast youth movement started by Dr. Moonje and the Hindu Maha Sabha.

Rather than of a Hindu militia, we would have preferred to speak of an *Indian* militia, that is to say, not of a body trained for the protection of the Hindus alone, but of a widespread organisation of young men *of all communities*, trained for the defence of India's rights, and solely aiming at the reconquest of India's freedom and the rise of India's power. We would have preferred undoubtedly, to speak

merely of *Indians* wherever we have spoken of Hindus, throughout this book, and we would have certainly done so, had all the people of Indian birth been at peace, united in the reverence of the same culture and the love of the same land.

We would be only too glad to see our brethren at peace with us, and we are sure that it is not impossible for them to unite with us in view of our highest common interest. *This is* indeed possible, provided they put India above everything, and we too; provided they are prepared, with us, to push all religious quarrels at the background and make the culture of India their culture, and the love of India their worship.

Unfortunately, the situation is such that *we are forced* to use, for our own self-defence against the communal exclusivism of many of our brothers, the precious energy which would have been much better employed, combined with theirs, against our common foes.

But I repeat: we do not hate our Indian brothers, Mohammadans, Christians, or whatever they may be; we have no grudge against them. The only thing we hate is anti-national religious fanaticism, from wherever it may come. We know that we have shared, in the past, the same eternal Indian culture with those who have since then, become the Indian Mohammadans and Christians, and, in the same spirit and with the same earnestness as we preach *India above all sects* to the Hindus, we urge those Indians who believe in so-called world-religions to put India above them. We call them back to our common national culture and civilisation, for the sake of the Nation. If they love the Nation, let them come and join us. They are welcome.

But whoever does not care for India and her culture,

whether he be born a Mohammadan, a Christian *or even a Hindu*, should have no place in the country but, at most, as a temporarily sojourning foreigner. Whoever loves any community more than India, should go out of India.

I sincerely thank the President of the Hindu Mission and all the Hindus, my co-workers and friends, who have encouraged me by their support, and also enlightened me by their experience. I thank also the President of the Hindu Maha Sabha, V.D. Savarkar, Dr. Moonje, and the other leaders and prominent members of the Hindu Maha Sabha with whom I had the honour to come in touch, for the inspiration I drew from them.

Calcutta, May 1939 The Authoress

# Introductory

Discussions about "religion" often fall into confusion because "religion" is a matter that can be considered from entirely different points of view. Two people speaking about "religion" may be, in fact, though unknowingly, speaking about two things quite apart from each other. So, what is "religion"? This is the first question to be answered.

* * *

One often considers, in "religion," merely certain moral teachings.

Nearly every main religious book contains some sort of teaching concerning the moral conduct of man, such as: "Thou shalt not steal," "Thou shalt not kill a man," or: "Thou shalt not kill any living creature," "Thou shalt not get drunk," etc., There are, no doubt, differences in the moral scale of values in different religions. For instance, to kill an animal is a sin, from the Jain point of view; from the Christian point of view, it is not. But any *moral* teaching presupposes some sort of society. Therefore, there is a minimum of prohibitions which we find in the moral code of every possible religion. *Always and everywhere*, such actions are "sinful" that are definitely anti-social, in the place and at the time where they are forbidden. And

such actions which cannot but be anti-social (such as, for instance, murder of man for personal motives) *cannot* be commended, or even tolerated, according to any possible code of morals. They constitute the stable minimum of prohibitions, which is common to all religions considered from the point of view of "morality."

* * *

Religions seem to differ more profoundly, when considered as metaphysical systems. Here, the very fundamentals are different, and there is not even a minimum of admitted notions, which can be taken as the common philosophical basis of all possible religions. The conception of Godhead, as well as that of creation, of soul, etc., is different, from one religious system to another. A religion can also well exist without the idea of God appearing at all, in the metaphysical outlook of its followers. Such is the case of Buddhism, of Jainism, and perhaps of other systems, less well known. The idea of salvation is also not an essential one; Shintoism has developed apart from it; and so had the national religions of Greece and Rome, long ago. Moreover, to a Christian and to a Hindu, for instance, who both put stress upon that idea, "salvation" means such an entirely different thing, that it is impossible, philosophically speaking, to call it a "common" notion of Hinduism and Christianity.

And if, neglecting to speak of different religions from a moral or intellectual point of view, one considers them merely in a spiritual light, as various paths to self-realisation, then, naturally, unity will appear. But it will not be unity among different *religions*; it will be the identity of the ultimate *result* of all religious disciplines, *as regards*

*man*. The place to which the various paths lead is the same, and, to the seekers of wisdom, that may be the only thing worth considering. But *the paths remain different. In this world*, religions do not meet, even as paths leading to a truer world.

* * *

But, if no unity among religions can be found on the basis either of common metaphysical notions, either of common spiritual discipline, at least, a broad two-fold classification can be made, on a psychological ground.

There are religions, such as Christianity and Islam, based upon teachings which are considered by their followers as the only *absolute truth.* These teachings are, therefore, supposed to be essentially good for *all mankind,* and it is the duty of every believer to preach them, by word and by deed, so that every man may accept them and be saved. Such religions style themselves as world-religions. The ideal of their followers is *the unification of all mankind, on the basis both of certain moral and spiritual teachings, and of certain metaphysical beliefs, looked upon as absolute truth, expressed once for all* at a certain time, in a certain place, by a certain person, and recorded in a certain sacred book to which, naturally, no alteration and no addition can be made.

Uses and customs can easily differ, from place to place, according to geographical, political, and other conditions, provided their existence is not a denial of any of the fundamental beliefs upon which the whole religious structure lies. *Culture itself can differ,* from nation to nation, as long as these common beliefs remain. What greater difference can there be, for instance, than that

between the culture of a Presbyterian Scotchman and of a Catholic Spaniard, or of a Syrian Christian, or of an Abyssinian? Yet, there is, between them, a minimum of *common beliefs,* sufficient to justify their common claim to be called "Christians." The same thing could be said about a Mohammadan from Arabia or Iraq, compared to a Mohammadan from Java.

We call *"creedal religions"* all religions of the type of Christianity or Islam, in which the link among the faithful is *necessarily* common beliefs, but *not necessarily common civilisation or culture.*

* * *

But there are religions which do not rest upon any moral or metaphysical "truth," considered as absolute. Their followers may or may not accept a certain number of common beliefs, and, if they do, still they do not condemn the many possible beliefs, in religions different from theirs, as "false," nor do they look down upon them as "precious teachings entangled with superstition." In fact, the followers of each one of such religions generally *do* differ from one another on the ground of metaphysics, of morals, or of religious discipline. Take the instance of the cultured ancient Greeks, followers of the same national religion but, at the same time, followers of different (and antagonistic) philosophies. There was, in that national religion of theirs, no common metaphysical system, comparable with that which we find in hellenised Christianity. Take the instance of the cultured modern Hindus, of different sects. There is very little common in their religious outlook, or in the particular discipline they may follow. One worships a personal God; one worships

God as impersonal; a third one does not believe in God at all; one practises hata yoga, another practises nothing but bhakti. Still, they are all Hindus, just as the ancient Greeks, inspite of their opposite metaphysical views, or of their personal devotion to entirely different Gods, were the followers of the same "religion."

It is easy to see that the word "religion," in this case, bears a totally different meaning from that which it had, while applied to "creedal religions" such as Christianity or Islam.

Here, there is no truth, whether concerning God, soul, salvation, creation, or anything else, which should be considered as *absolute* by all men. *Every truth is relative*, being the outcome of man's experience, which is necessarily limited. And therefore, metaphysics (the common ground of religious thought, in "creedal" religions) are a matter of individual outlook. Spiritual realisation is also *individual*. The knowledge that it gives cannot be transmitted to a crowd. Even the path to realisation cannot be shown but to those who have undergone, through previous experience, a sufficient evolution.

In other words, in religions which are not creedal, there can be no conflict between "religion" and "philosophy," no more than between "religion" and "science," for a broad spirit of *free research*—that what is called, in modern language, *scientific spirit*—is applied there, without restriction, to every sphere of life, *including* spiritual realisation. And there can be no common beliefs commended to men at different stages of evolution. There can be no one-sided outlook on God, soul, etc., "good for all mankind," to be preached from country to country.

Hinduism is the most perfect type of such "religions"

which we shall call, presently, for sake of convenience, "non-creedal," until further analysis allows us to characterise them more positively.

* * *

We have said that, when one speaks of "religion," one often speaks, in reality, of morals or metaphysics. One still more often speaks of a certain culture and civilisation, characterising a certain society.

Even the idea of a "creedal" religion is not entirely free from this historical notion of civilisation and society. The *creed* is one thing, and society is another; that is true. But a creed without any society organised upon it, stands nowhere *as a religion*, while a society, without any creedal unity, but of which the members share a common civilisation and a common culture, has a sound existence of its own, *as a society*. The great difference between creedal and non-creedal religions lies in the fact that, while the principle of unity and the sense of brotherhood are to be found, among the followers of a creedal religion, in *commonness of belief*, (and not necessarily of culture and civilisation) that principle of unity and that sense of brotherhood are to be found, among the followers of a non-creedal religion, *in commonness of culture and of civilisation*, (and not necessarily of belief).

Two Indians, of whom one believes in God and one does not, are *two Hindus*, provided they both share that culture and civilisation which is the only thing all Hindus are supposed to have in common, which *is*, really, "Hinduism." While an American or a Frenchman who has accepted one of the doctrines of manifold "Hindu philosophy," Vedantism or any other, or any special type of Hindu

devotion *is no Hindu* as long as he has not adopted such a style, not only of thinking, but also of living, by which he enables himself to become one of the units of *Hindu society;* moreover, socially speaking, he is no Hindu *as long as a sufficient portion, at least, of Hindu society, has not accepted him* as one of its members. It is in one's own hand to become a Christian. It is not in one's own hand *alone* to become a full-fledged Hindu, (or a follower of any other non-creedal religion).

Civilisation and culture are not free from geographical, as well as historical conditions. A follower of a non-creedal religion has necessarily, along with the greatest spirit of relativity, (and therefore of toleration) in every matter where his religious "philosophy" is concerned, *a geographical sense of religion,* in every matter where "religion," to him, means *society*. One can dream of unifying mankind through certain beliefs, (though this also, is an illusion) but one cannot even imagine the same civilisation, the same style of life, the same type of society all over the world. Therefore, in a non-creedal religion, no missionary activities can be conceived beyond certain geographical boundaries.

* * *

One may wonder, after this, if there is anything or not which is neither morality, nor metaphysics, nor society, but "real" religion. And if there be such a thing, what is it? Can it not be defined anyhow, except negatively?

The only thing which can, it seems, apart from all the rest, be called "real" religion, is spiritual experience.

It is clear that, however different *religions* may be, *religion* is one, if considered in that light alone. And it is

in considering spiritual experience, which ends in the *realisation* of truth, that teachers like Sri Ramakrishna were able to say that, "just as all rivers run to the sea," so do all religions have but one goal, one end: self-realisation.

Spiritual experience certainly gives knowledge concerning certain metaphysical entities and certain metaphysical problems. But it is to be carefully distinguished from metaphysics, for it is not something which can be discussed, and reasoned upon through the power of intellect alone, as generally metaphysics are. It has to be *gone through*. (In fact, the existence of metaphysics apart from spiritual experience, is a sign of the weakness of man, who feels as if he must have ideas about what he does not know and cannot understand. And all really great metaphysical systems, which have marked their influence upon the evolution of human thought, rest upon the background of some spiritual experience.) Creedal religions, such as Christianity, are right when they say that their dogmas cannot be understood through intellect. From the point of view of real religion, (spiritual experience) these religions are only incomplete when they ask one to *believe* in their dogmas, without giving him the means to *realise* the truth contained in them, and also, when they assert that there is no salvation for whoever does not accept *those* dogmas.

* * *

But spiritual experience is *personal*. It cannot be transmitted. Even the desire of acquiring it cannot be created in everybody. And, merely intellectual acceptance of the truth contained in the words of a certain realised man, or blind faith in the writings of an "inspired" book,

cannot stand for spiritual experience—for self-realisation. That is why one can find, among the followers of creedal religions, a certain morality, a great amount of theology, but such a little real religion, (personal realisation of truth) compared to what could be expected.

What can be done is not to teach spirituality, but, through the habits of life, through customs and ceremonies, through art and culture, and daily dealings, to create an "atmosphere" in which spiritual experience appears to be the ultimate experience of man. No common creed is necessary for that. Only certain permanent influences, in certain special social surroundings, are. And that is what the Hindus have understood, from time immemorial up to the present day. The great religious value of Hinduism—manifold on the ground of morals, as well as of beliefs, but unified by culture, by artistic expression, by the "style of life" it evolves—lies in that fact.

But this is not the only reason, this is not even the main reason for which we want to preserve and strengthen Hindu civilisation, and organise Hindu society throughout India.

Apart from the high philosophies contained in the Hindu Scriptures and from the high spiritual ideal realised by the Hindu seers, we want to defend *Hindu civilisation and society,* against the increasing forces of rival proselytising societies strongly united by the consciousness of a common creed. Even if India itself were to disappear just now, the philosophical and spiritual inheritance of the Hindus would remain. Mankind would preserve it, because it is worth preserving. It is immortal, and needs no one to defend it. What *we* want to defend, we repeat, is Hindu society, the Hindu people, *the bearers*

*of Hindu civilisation, whose number is decreasing every day.* They are the body of Hinduism, of which the high philosophies and spiritual realisations are the everlasting soul.

Our point is that Hindu society must not perish; nor must it stagnate in its present state of weakness. We want it to live because we know it can be mighty and beautiful, and also, because it is Indian, *nay, because it is India herself.*

We have no other reason to defend it.

Chapter 1

# Indian Nationalism and Hindu Consciousness

What we have just said about creedal and non-creedal religions, leads us to the statement which can be considered as the main thesis of this essay: Hinduism is the national religion of India, and there is no real India besides Hindu India.

We know, there are people in India, nowadays, (and, unfortunately, not merely among the non-Hindus) who are ready to criticise this statement. They tell us that "religion is a personal concern; why should not every Indian follow the one he pleases? That has nothing to do with his national feelings." They tell us that "in all civilised countries, nationality and religion are two separate entities." They tell us that, "in Japan, for instance—the most progressive country of Asia—people of the same family may frequent different temples, belong to different religions, and yet be united." And they add: "In India, why should it not be the same?"

All these remarks presuppose the same fundamental confusion of the two entirely different meanings of the word "religion," that is to say, creed and culture. They are perfectly justified as long as one speaks of "religion" as a *creed*. They do not hold,

when "religion" means a *culture and a civilisation,* without any special creed, which is the case with Hinduism.

Religion is a personal concern. That is true if, by "religion," you mean a spiritual path. No Hindu will deny that paths leading to the realisation of one's soul are infinite in number. None either will deny that creeds also may be contrary, and yet all true, for truth has contrary aspects; that, in the same family, one can worship a personal God, another, a number of Gods and Goddesses, and a third one, no God at all, and yet, all three may be united in the most perfect brotherhood. It is only those who believe that one only creed is true, while all the others are false and harmful, who can insist on forcing the same faith upon the whole world. But the Hindus never shared this belief.

As far as religion means a path to salvation, to "realisation of one's inner self," to "Godhood," etc., not only it should be, but *it always is,* in fact, separate from nationality, and beyond the interference of State. Even in the case of a religion supposed to unite all its followers on the basis of a common creed, the *spiritual path* that each one takes, *is* different, and outside State control; for it is psychologically impossible for different people to "realise" the truth, expressed by the same dogmas, in exactly the same way. The most an autocratic State can do, if it must poke its nose into religious matters, ("religious" meaning spiritual, or even merely metaphysical), is to force unto the people the *exterior acceptance* of the same dogmas, under threat of punishment. That is what Christian States have tried in Europe, during

the days of the Holy Inquisition. And that is the limit of what can be tried. It has proved a failure; for never an entire nation of so-called Christians has been united in the same faith, (in the same creed), not to speak of the same inexpressible realisation of God. If you only just examine the personal faith of a few Christians of the same nationality, you will easily be convinced of the truth of this statement.

In the "civilised" countries where "religion" and nationality, *Church* and *State,* are supposed to be separate, *creed* and nationality are separate, and always were, inspite of infructuous efforts to establish State dogmas. But *culture and nationality are not separate; civilisation and nationality are not, and never will be.*

Nowadays, a Frenchman who is a Catholic and a Frenchman who is a Theosophist, and another one who is a Seventh Day Adventist, are all three Frenchmen, not merely because they all speak French and have the same French ancestors, and live on the same soil. They are all three French because, inspite of minor differences (the Theosophist may be a vegetarian and the Catholic a meat-eater; their opinions may also differ, concerning the nature of God), they share common daily thoughts, common habits; a common way of dressing, of sitting, of furnishing their houses; some common standardised ideas about literature, art, music, science; in one word, that what we call "French culture" and "French civilisation."

French culture is not a religion, for sure. But it is an aspect of the broader and more complex "European culture" and "European civilisation" which is that

culture and civilisation that developed in the West of Europe, under the double influence of Christianity and Rationalism. We cannot call it Christian culture and civilisation, for Christianity alone has not produced it. And though the part played in its development by Christianity is great, no doubt, it is difficult to determine. Christianity being a "creed" before anything else, could not be the only factor in this huge creation of this world.

The fact that "religion" means (at least in the modern East), *culture and civilisation* as well as personal creed, misguides us when we bring forth, as an example of progress, the countries where "Church and State" are separate. If "Church," if "religion," is taken in its later sense, that of civilisation and culture, then, religion and State, or, better say, religion and society, are separate nowhere, not even in the West. Just try to imagine the case of a Frenchman who would live entirely, in his daily life, according to Mohammadan lines! The case is not impossible. But the gentleman, inspite of his European face and of his ancestry, would no longer *be* a Frenchman. He would be some sort of non-European, exiled in France.

The example of the creedal toleration of Japan, is as fallacious as that of the modern States of Europe. It may be that, in some Japanese families, *from the point of view of creed,* two brothers are Buddhists, a third one Christian, and a fourth one, a faithful observer of Shintoic rites (which implies no creed). That is to be said about the four men, as spiritual beings or as thinkers: two believe in the Buddha, in the Law, and in the Community; one, in Christ; and

the other one may be an agnostic, or anything else. But, *as social beings*, they all live in the same way, think according to the same standards, share the same culture; *as Japanese*, they can all four be said followers of Shinto. Theirs is the smiling and heroic civilisation that Shinto thought and custom have brought forth. The sanctity of the Emperor is as great to the so-called Christian as to the faithful observer of the national rites. Moreover, the Christian himself will not hesitate to take part in a public function, performed according to Shinto rites, *as a member of the nation*. And, just as the rest of his compatriots, Shintoists, Buddhists, or whatever they may be, he bears *a Japanese name*—not a "Christian" one, which would be a foreign one, whether imported from Portugal or from America, or directly from the Bible, that is to say, from Palestine.

* * *

Variety of faiths is no hindrance to the formation of nationality, or to the solidity of national unity. And we repeat: in no civilised nations do all the citizens understand religion in the same way exactly, even if they profess the same creed, (religion meaning a path to spiritual knowledge).

But *no nation can grow out of the patch-work binding together two or more civilisations. The very idea of common nationality, and the idea of pertaining to different cultures and civilisations, are contradictory*. We cannot say: a French Catholic and a French Theosophist are both French, *therefore* why should a Hindu Indian and a Musulman Indian not be

two Indians? This presumption of an analogy between the two cases, is as fallacious as the statements referred to above, about "Church and State." *There is* such a thing as French civilisation and culture, which is neither Theosophical, nor strictly Catholic. But *there is no such thing* as an Indian civilisation, which is neither Hindu nor Musulman. And just as France, just as Japan, just as any nation in the world, *if India is to be a nation,* she must have *one* civilisation, one culture, not half a dozen.

And the only civilisation for all India is Hindu civilisation. The only culture for all India is Hindu culture. Indian national consciousness is nothing else but Hindu national consciousness, strengthened, enlightened, broadened.

Why?

We have said that, in no country which is really a nation, two or more civilisations *coexist.* But it is undeniable that some (and even most) nations, have gone through two or more civilisations, *one after the other.* Christian Catholic Italy is not the Italy of the Caesars, however, she may be proud of all what Pagan Rome was. It is Italy still, *to us,* who have not known the former Italy directly. Nobody can tell what an ancient Roman would think of his country,if he came back. Nobody can tell what Hypatia would think of her Greeks, if she came back. In her days of struggle between the old Greek civilisation, with its Gods and its philosophies, and the new one, based upon Byzantine Christianity, the Pagans alone were honoured with the name of "Hellenes," that is to say: "Greeks," and of "Ethnikoi" that is to say: "nationals." The Christians were simply called Christians,

without any distinction of race or country. Now, the inspired champion of Hellenic Paganism would find that "Hellen" and "Christianos" have become synonymous. Byzantine Christianity, (or, better say, Byzantine Christian civilisation, grown in the union of State and Church) has given Greece a new national consciousness.

But a new national consciousness, based upon a new civilisation, with a new mythology at its background, can only grow, in a nation, when the old one *is dead*. The old one must die *first*. Take the case of Greece: not until the last man bearing witness of the greatness of Greek Paganism had passed away, styled by his Christian countrymen as "Greek" and as "National," could the Christian Greeks feel themselves Christians *and* Greeks, and boast of their Church as of a national Church, and forget that their religion had come from a foreign land.

In the same way, even if we admit, for sake of argument, that there *can be* a genuine Indian national consciousness with Islam at its background, we must remember that it is not until the last Hindu Indian comes to pass away, that such a consciousness can rise.

The least one can say is that this possibility is very remote.

* * *

It is one thing to read about one's former national religion in a text-book, and it is quite a different thing *to see it*, living all around, with sounds and colours, in daily life.

Christian Italy and Christian Greece can easily have a national consciousness of themselves as "Christian" countries. Their people know about their beautiful ancestral Paganism through two things only: through books and through ruins. But no written description and no gorgeous remains whatsoever eloquent, can be as eloquent as living life.

Indian Mohammadans and Christians have the sight of the national Paganism which they have forsaken, daily before their eyes; not in books and works of art alone, but in the millions of Hindu brethren in the midst of whom they themselves move about. In vain their Indian ancestry and their Indian tongue remain important factors, which could, under other circumstances, create in them an Indian nationalism. What is India? And who is an Indian? Above the entrance of one of the great libraries of Athens, one can read these words: "Are Greeks, those who share our culture." Are Indians also, first of all, those who share Indian culture and Indian civilisation. And, as long as there is a single Hindu family performing, to a certain extent, the ancient rites, living according to Hindu lines, and creating, wherever it is, a Hindu atmosphere, non-Hindu Indian nationalism is inconceivable. The Hindus, however few they may be, will keep on saying to the non-Hindus, by the fact of their very presence: "*We* represent India; not you. Therefore India is *ours*, not yours."

And they will be right. India *is* theirs, because they alone are India.

The Indian Mohammadans themselves can realise, half-consciously, the fact of Hinduism being the only

Indian civilisation and culture. That is perhaps why they like to imagine that their ancestors were all immigrants from Persia or Arabia. This claim is absurd. The Mohammadan population of only one district in Bengal (Mymensingh) is more than half the total population of Arabia. In fact, practically all the Musulmans of India are the descendants of converts from Hinduism. They are Indians by blood, no doubt. But to feel: "We are Indians" would mean, to admit that beautiful Hindu culture is *theirs* also. Then, perhaps, many would feel like coming back to the still numerous fold, and sharing the national life once more, with their Hindu brethren. But their religion, being a creedal one, is naturally intolerant. Non-Musulmans must be looked upon as "heathen," and everything "heathen" must be rejectable—everything, including Indian nationalism, that is to say, the consciousness of unity with "heathen" people, on the basis of a common "heathen" civilisation and culture. Moreover, the Hindu brethren will not take them back in their society. So it is better for them, to say, like the fox in the fable, that "the grapes are sour;" it is better to call themselves the descendants of Arabs and Persians, and to feel themselves one with the Mohammadan countries outside India. There is a lesser possibility for some of them to be tempted, sooner or later, to prefer India to Islam; and a lesser possibility also, for those who may be tempted already, if any, to fall into temptation, and meet with bitter disappointments in daily life.

* * *

Hinduism, taken not as any particular Hindu philosophy, neither as any particular spiritual path, but as Hindu culture and civilisation as a whole, is not merely India's national religion ("religion" meaning, here, both culture, civilisation and cult), but it is also the only religion which can remake India a strong glorious nation—a World power. It is the only religion which can become, more and more, the very expression of Indian nationalism.

First of all, Hinduism has developed *in India.* All its immense mythology (the most important part of it, for those who are not merely intellectuals; and how many are intellectuals wholesale?) is closely linked with the Indian soil. Its Gods and Goddesses are, no doubt, world-forces, *philosophically,* but practically, *socially, they are Indians.* Most Indians cannot realise yet what an advantage it is for them, as a nation, to be the compatriots of their Gods and Goddesses.

Every country is sacred to those who love it. But India is the field of worldly play, (*lila kshetra,*) of all those Gods, Goddesses, Rishis and Incarnations, whom the Hindu Scriptures speak about, of whom the Hindu children know the names and the marvellous stories; to whom incense is burnt, and flowers offered, in the Hindu temples, shrines, and homes. And this gives to India's sacredness a religious sanction. The love of an Indian for his soil (if that Indian be a Hindu), is not an ordinary patriotism, like that of an Englishman or a Frenchman. It is also reverence for the land of the Gods.

An Englishman may certainly love his England. But if he is a Christian, he must be feeling that Palestine, where his Lord was born, and preached,

and died, is still more holy than England can ever be. If he would go on a religious pilgrimage, it would be to Jerusalem, outside England, not to any place *in* England. The same with a Frenchman, or any modern European. But just as an ancient Greek used to have his sacred places *in* Greece, a modern Hindu has still his sacred places within the boundaries of his motherland. Wherever he may go on a pilgrimage, may it be to Benares, to Mathura, to Gangotri or to Rameswaram, he will remain *in* India, in contact with his own soil. An Indian Mohammadan has to look abroad, to the most sacred spots on earth. So has an Indian Christian. A Hindu enjoys the privilege of regarding his own India, not only as the most beloved or as the most beautiful, but also as the most holy Land on earth.

* * *

Secondly, it is through Hinduism alone that one can realise India's unity, as a territory and as a civilisation.

So many different provinces, which are, each one, large enough and different enough from one another to be separate nations. So many different languages, each one with its own evolution, its literature and its pride. So many different sceneries, and different climates, including both equatorial and polar. But, broadly speaking, one type of society, one common civilisation; the same festivities, the same sacred language, the same places of pilgrimage within the limits of the same great India.

Several have said, nowadays, that it is the

Europeans who have taught the Indians nationalism, indirectly; that India had never felt herself a nation, before the late struggle undertaken against British domination. This is difficult to believe, in the light of Hindu legend. Long centuries before any foreigner had settled in India, the unity of the country was materialised in symbols. What more suggestive story than that, for instance, of Sati, Siva's wife, whose body, divided, after her death, in fifty-one pieces, is lying still in fifty-one different places, therefore revered as "tirthasthans," throughout the Indian Peninsula? One lies near Peshawar, one in Kamakhya, not far from India's eastern boundaries; one in Benares, one in the very extreme South, others here and there. Fifty-one pieces, but *one* body; fifty-one "tirthasthans" in the name of the same Goddess, scattered over the same territory. Indeed, among the different interpretations that can be given of the legend of Sati, one can take it in this light: Sati is India herself, personified; India's soil, sacred from end to end, is, with all its variety, the actual body of *one* great Goddess.

The consciousness of Indian unity is nothing else but this feeling. And Indian nationalism means: devotion to this great Goddess.

That is why, besides the Hindus, no one can share it. Whoever really shares it *is* a Hindu.

* * *

For, last but not least, there is no other religion which can be used as a basis of Indian patriotism, like that of the Hindus; no other religion which can create and

magnify nationalism in an Indian heart. And, as nothing is more necessary to India, today, than a strong national consciousness and national pride, we add: nothing is more necessary, today, than to revive, to exalt, to cultivate intelligent Hinduism, throughout the length and breadth of India.

No doubt, the Christian nations of Europe are full of patriotic pride. No doubt also, the spirit of war is not what is lacking in them. Yet, they are supposed to be Christian.

But they *are not* Christian, in spirit. Christianity is a creed for the uplift of individuals; not a civilisation upon which nations can be built. No nation built upon *real* Christian doctrine could live, in the midst of historical conditions. It is in collaboration with Christian *Churches*, that are organisations of this world, and not with Christianity, which is spiritual, that the so-called Christian nations have thrived. And their whole history is in flagrant contradiction with the spirit of Christianity.

Not merely Christianity, but any religion which is based upon a creed, supposed to be "truth" for all men, is in conflict with nationalism.

Greeks are Christians, and so are Bulgarians. They even belong to the same Church. And Christians are supposed to love one another. Yet, if war breaks out between Greece and Bulgaria, the Greek Christian priests will bless the arms which are to carry death among the Bulgarians, and the Bulgarian Christian priests will also bless the arms which are to kill the Greeks. French and Germans are also Christians. Yet, if war breaks out between them, each nation will pray to the same God—a God of love—for its victory

over the other. Nothing is more inconsistent, because they are supposed to be Christian nations. Had they not been so, nothing would have been more natural. But Christianity itself is not natural. And the growth of Europe, with different Church-civilisations at its background, has taken place *inspite of Christianity, not according to Christianity.*

Any Christian who feels himself nearer to an Atheist of his own country than to a Christian from a foreign land, is not a *real* Christian. Nay, any follower of a creedal religion who is a nationalist at the same time, is utterly inconsistent. One cannot serve two masters. One cannot put God first, and also one's Nation *first* ... unless the religion he professes is of such a type, that Nation and God can be taken as the same. This is not the case with Christianity and Islam. But this is the case with Hinduism. Therefore, it can be said that Hinduism is not only the religion which has developed *in* India, and which gives a living illustration of India's unity in variety. It is also the religion which, owing to its very outlook, to its very tenets, gives India the basis of a consistent nationalism, entirely in harmony with the spirit of its cult.

* * *

To a pantheistic minded Hindu, God (if He exists) is not distinct from Nature, from what we call the visible world. The visible is only a relative expression of the Invisible. And therefore, every path leads finally to God. Through everything we love and worship, we, in fact, love and worship God. Nothing

else can possibly be loved but God, through various forms, and names, and symbols.

There is a lovely story concerning Sri Ramkrishna Paramhamsa. One day, a childless widow came to visit the great saint. She asked him what to do to actually see Lord Krishna, for whom she professed a great devotion. The saint asked her whom did she love the best *in this world.* And when she answered: "My brother's young son," he said unto her: "Keep on loving him, and love him still more. Keep his sight constantly before your eyes; serve him and love him. And soon, in that little child, you will actually see the One who used to play, years and years ago, in the fields of Vrindavan." She did what she was told and *saw* Krishna, in the garb of her little nephew.

In the same way, among the Hindus, all fundamental natural feelings are magnified, exalted, sanctified through religion. Love and service to one's husband is love and service to one's God. A husband *is* God, visible and tangible. Love and service to one's own mother is love and service to the Mother of the Universe. Every mother *is* Mother Kali, personified.

What is, then, more natural for a Hindu, than to consider his greater mother—Mother India—as another broader and more lasting expression of the Dark-blue Goddess? What is more natural than to feel that love and service to India, is love and service to that infinite Mother worshipped in temples? What is more natural than to erect temples, like that "Bharat-Mata ka Mandir" of Benares, where incense is burnt in front of a map of India?

On the Diwali day, the girls of the Arya Kanya Maha Vidyalaya of Jullundur (Punjab) draw a large

map of India upon the ground of the school courtyard; they set lights in a row, all along its outlines, and then, standing around it, they sing "Vande Mataram," and other patriotic songs. They are right, and perfectly consistent with the spirit of the national religion. And no cult, besides Hinduism, can promote in India that beautiful *devotional nationalism,* that revival, on an immense scale, of the spirit of "Ananda Math," which is *the thing*, the only basic thing that present India needs to uplift herself as a nation, and become free, and great once more.

Chapter 2

# The Human Value of Hinduism

## FREE SCIENTIFIC THOUGHT APPLIED TO RELIGIOUS MATTERS

We defend Hinduism, because it is India's very self-expression; and we love India, because it is India.

But, along with the fact that it is the soul of a great nation, and a nation-building force, Hinduism is to be examined in the light of its human value. India is great to the eyes of the intelligent world, because of what she stands for.

It is the custom, nowadays, to say that India stands for "spirituality," and to put an immense stress upon that word. It seems that, by doing so, one opposes India to "materialistic" Europe and America; and, as what is "material" is supposed to be inferior to what is "spiritual," the consciousness of this opposition is a great consolation to many Indians. They seem to think that down-trodden India becomes less down-trodden, if only she can be proved superior to her present rulers, in one thing at least.

We think this is a blunder.

Even if we admit that the Indians are all saints and that their present rulers are all devils, this does

not change the condition of India. It only makes it still more shocking than it is, if more shocking can be, and therefore, is no consolation. But, in fact, the Indians as a whole, are not more "spiritual" than other people. There are giants of real spirituality, in present India, no doubt. But the average Hindus, when they boast of their "spirituality," are not true to themselves. Nor are they doing justice to their country, and to their religion.

Hindu thought and culture (what is commonly called, Hindu religion), is, by no means, superior to other religions because of the famous spirituality that shines in the Hindu religious giants, saints and seers. Saints and seers, realised men, are to be found also among the followers of other religions. Are they greater or lesser in number? It is difficult to say. And it does not matter.

Hinduism is really superior to other religions, not for its spirituality, but for that still more precious thing it gives to its followers: *a scientific outlook on religion and on life.* Hindu spirituality is a consequence of that very outlook.

* * *

We consider it useless to oppose India to the "West," as "spiritualistic" opposed to "materialistic." Hindu superiority lies elsewhere; not in the opposition of Hindu thought to European thought, but in the fact of its greater consistency than that of European thought, of its greater faithfulness to life, of greater harmony between life and it; in the *universality* of the Hindu's scientific outlook,

compared to that of the Europeans.

From those very days the Europeans abandoned their various non-creedal Aryan cults to take to Christianity, inconsistency in life, and restlessness of mind, among those who, in Europe, think freely, have two main sources:

(1) The opposition of Christian religion, in its essence, to out and out nationalism.

(2) The opposition of Christian religion to free scientific thinking in *all* matters.

On the ground of nationalism, Europe has tried to solve the problem by a compromise, and tried to settle the compromise upon the authority of the Gospel: "Render unto Caeser the things which are Caesar's, and unto God, the things which are God's." Church and State, religion and politics, must be separate.

Church and State can be separated, but religion and life cannot. And to many, at least, politics are nothing, if not an aspect of life. Nationalism is a concern of life, and one of the strongest ones. The Europeans may say that they are Christians as religious beings (as men, anxious about their salvation) and that, at the same time, nothing prevents them from being nationalists, as citizens of ephemeral countries of this world. It is easy to say; not so easy to live up to. For the Christians' kingdom *is not* of this world, and circumstances are sure to turn up, in which the full-hearted service to one's nation appears like the service of Mammon, opposed to that of God. It is written: one cannot serve both God and Mammon. A real Christian has to choose.

In fact, Europe has chosen Mammon, since long

ago. But she continues professing a nominal allegiance to God, allegiance which, to a devout Christian, must seem the most shocking, wherever nationalism is the strongest.

We have shown how Hindu India, owing to the very nature of her religion, is forever free from such an inconsistency.

* * *

On the ground of science, the clash with Christianity seems at first easier to avoid; we are, here, in a realm of thought, not of action, are we not? And thought is very subtle.

After many a struggle during those dark days, where to express one's free thinking in *all* matters was to risk one's life, Europe has come to a compromise neither better nor worse than the one referred to above. Like politics and religion, science also, and religion, reason and faith, must be separate. No need of them quarrelling; let them just keep quiet, each one in its corner, each one in its compartment.

In all "religious matters," all what is concerned with one's salvation, there is the authority, if not always of the Christian Church *and* Scriptures, at least of the Christian Scriptures, of the holy Bible. Read the Bible, and believe like a little child. Let your reasoning power aside, when you open the sacred book. Interpretation is a dangerous game; it can lead to many errors. Therefore, do not interpret; do not discuss, but *accept, believe,* and you will be saved.

That is, "in religious matters." But in every sphere of worldly knowledge, in every branch of science, believe nothing at all on the authority of anyone. *Believe not,* but suspend your judgement, *doubt.* Doubt, and dispassionate curiosity, are at the origin of all scientific knowledge. *Accept not, but experiment, examine, criticise, find out for yourself.* No miraculous grace can inspire you with the knowledge of what water is made of; analyse it. Scientific knowledge is not to be given and accepted. It wants to be conquered.

The result? Either a modern European is an out and out "free thinker," who does not trouble about religious matters at all, or else, he is a man who has established a separation, in his thought and life, between the "things of the world" and the "things of faith," that is to say, a man who, however intelligent he may be, uses his reason and his experience in certain matters only, while in others (which are supposed to be vital), is contented with the authority of a book.

Christians will say that there is an experience of the truth of the Bible, in Christian life. We do not deny it. But it is not an experience that can be taught and transmitted, like a scientific one. It is no "proof" of Bible truth. Moreover, its possibility does not shut out the possibility of other equally sound religious "experiences," in non-Christian lives. The "jealousy" of the Christian God, that is to say, the exclusive attitude of a faithful Christian towards all what, as a religious teaching, is proposed to mankind besides Christianity, is the thing which cannot but bring inconsistency, wherever Christian faith and

scientific thought are to be found together. The fact, often recalled, that many great scientists have been, at the same time, faithful Christians, does not lessen that inconsistency. Wherever arbitrary separations are set up, restlessness of mind sooner or later arises, with the growing consciousness of a "false position." Life is one, in its complexity, and impossible to divide into compartments. The weakness of reasonable men who follow a creedal religion (whichever it may be; we took the case of Christianity merely as an instance), lies in the implicit denial of that fact. It is always possible to point out, either their want of true simple faith, either their wilful or unwilful absence of elementary criticism.

* * *

When we speak of the superiority of Hinduism as a "scientific" religion, we first put stress upon the absence, among the Hindus, of any sort of inconsistency due to the separation of the "things of this world" and the "things of the spirit." No water-tight compartments, here, one for "reason" and the other for "faith." No "nature" and "super-nature," to be dealt with in different ways. But one broad life, at different stages; one broad nature, with various aspects; one, and only one method of knowledge: experience.

The Hindus also say: believe nothing on mere authority, but experiment, *realise;* go through "sadhana;" *find out for yourself.* Knowledge is not to be given to you by grace. *It wants to be conquered.*

But the difference is that this knowledge is not merely the ordinarily called "scientific" knowledge, concerning the phenomena of matter; it is *every knowledge*, including the highest (or subtlest) knowledge of what is at the background of all phenomena, of all existence: the Absolute. In other words, every knowledge must be scientific, otherwise it is no knowledge at all.

As one can see, far from being opposed to so-called "materialistic" European thought, Hindu thought is exactly of the same nature. *Thought*, in fact, is neither European nor Indian, nor "materialistic" nor "spiritualistic;" it is thought, and no more, unless it is nothing. The superiority of the Hindus lies, not in the different nature of their thought, *but in its consistent and universal application to all realms of life*, including the realm of spiritual development, while European thought stops where begins, either blind religious faith, or else (more and more nowadays), systematical agnosticism.

A Hindu as well, can be an Agnostic (and many are, and always were, in all times). But his agnosticism is never systematical. *He* does not know, say, what is beyond the world revealed to him by his senses and by his intelligence. *He* has no experience of an "Absolute." But he will not deny the possibility of having one. To the "sadhak," who asserts "his" experience, he will not say: "It is nothing but imagination." He possesses the real scientific mind, which is dogmatic about nothing, but open to everything.

* * *

That scientific character of Hinduism should be looked upon by the Hindus as their strength, not as a weakness, like some seem to believe. The man of one book and of one creed may be strong, for the time being; but in the long run, it is a strength (and the greatest of all strength) for a religion, to have no particular founder, no particular book, no particular creed, settled once forever; to be just a continuous flow of thought, in search of knowledge, on the basis of a continuously renewed experience.

While free thinking can (and *does*) injure the prestige of creedal religions, and will do so more and more; while different political and social creeds, whose international appeal is as great as that of any religion, nowadays, are daily detaching the faithful from their old Prophets and books, calling them to give allegiance to new ones, no force can ever break down such a religion as Hinduism. For Hinduism is, philosophically speaking, nothing else but infinitely various human thought itself, in continuous evolution. No end to the list of its prophets and seers, no end to the list of its books, until the end of mankind; but ever open possibilities to new experiences, and new expressions of truth.

No intelligent man would believe that *all* what can be said about such an apparently easily knowable thing as water, has been said once forever. Still, many people believe that *all* what is to be said about God, has been said, and that there is nothing to add to it. There are in Europe and America "scientists," who accept this inconsistency. Scientists they may be; but their scientific attitude remains confined to a

narrow sphere of knowledge. A true Hindu, whether he knows even how to read and write or not, keeps (or, at least is expected to keep) a scientific attitude in *every* sphere of life. He keeps, wherever he may be, that smiling spirit of relativity, which was the ornament of the refined ones, in ancient Greece. Give him self-consciousness and self-assertion, and he will be like one of them.

Chapter 3

# The Human Value of Hinduism

## INDIAN PAGANISM: THE LAST LIVING EXPRESSION OF ARYAN BEAUTY

Another, and perhaps a more expressive word for Hinduism would be: Indian Paganism.

The Christian missionaries call "Pagans" all those who are neither Christians, nor Mohammadans, nor Jews, that is to say, all those whose religious tradition has no connexion with the Bible and tradition of the Jews. We accept the word, because it is a convenient one. It points out some sort of similarity between all non-creedal religions of the past as well as of the present day.

Once, practically all the world was "Pagan." Now that half its people have been converted either to Christianity or to Islam, the number of Pagans is less. That is no proof of the lesser value of different Paganisms, compared to the great creedal religions. It is surely an advantage, to be numerous; but it is no virtue. And therefore the number of its followers has nothing to do with the *value* of a cult.

* * *

We have remarked that among the so-called Christians, there are more and more people who are no total believers in the Bible at all, but "free thinkers." And we have said that free thought in *all* matters, including religion, is a feature of Hinduism. This does not mean that we consider all the free thinkers of the World as Hindus.

Philosophically, Hinduism *is* an attitude of mind, and an outlook on life. But it is not *only* that. It is a number of *cults,* among which one may choose. And, whatever cult it may be, *it is a cult*, one of the immemorial Pagan cults, surviving in the midst of the modern world. The Hindus are one of the few modern civilised people who are openly Pagans.

The Japanese, with their official Shintoic ritual, are another of these people. And they being one of the leading nations of the modern world, their example is priceless. They show magnificently that, even if it be indispensable to adopt any new mechanical inventions, in order to compete with other nations, and live, yet it is not necessary to adopt the religion and the civilisation of the inventors, wholesale. Aeroplanes and war-tanks, and modern banking business on a broad scale, can perfectly go together with the existence of a Solar dynasty of king-Gods, *in whose Godhood everyone actually believes*, as well as an Egyptian did, six thousand years ago. When India, freed from internal weakness and foreign yoke, will become again a world power, then she will, still better perhaps than Japan, stand as a witness of such sort of truth as this.

In the meantime, she remains the last great country of Aryan civilisation, and, to a great extent,

of Aryan tongue and race, where a living and beautiful Paganism is the religion both of the masses and of the intelligentsia.

* * *

We like this word "Paganism," applied to the Hindu cults. It is sweet to the ears of more than one of the fallen Aryans of Europe, accustomed to refer to "Pagan Greece," and to "Pagan beauty" as the most perfect expressions of their own genius in the past. That is also why we use the word, preferably to any other.

* * *

India has perhaps never enjoyed yet, even in the days of her glory, the world-wide popular fame she enjoys nowadays. This world-wide fame is greatly due to the repeated assertion of Hindu "spirituality," and to the philosophy of non-violence, preached by Mahatma Gandhi.

Very few people have grasped the spirit of Christ as well as Mahatma Gandhi, and several other prominent Hindus of the present day and of the last century. And among the few Europeans who have been sincerely attracted by Hinduism, practically all have sought, in it, if not a doctrine, at least a moral creed, or, better say a *moral attitude* of love and kindness—the very same thing they could have found in Christianity, if only they took the trouble of separating the simple and luminous personality of Christ from all theological and heretical

entanglements. In other words it is, generally, the dream of a better Christianity that brings fair people from across the seas to "serve mankind" in the Ramakrishna Mission, or to express their pure devotional love as inmates of some Vaishnava Math.

The Hindus of the present day like such admirers. Many of them also like the idea that there is more true Christian spirit among outstanding Hindus, than among most Christians. There is nothing to say about these likings, if not that they are, to a great extent, a subtle expression of unfortunate India's deep-rooted inferiority complex.

Pure spirituality (realisation of one's soul), naturally transcends creed, as well as ceremonies. So a realised Hindu will look like a realised Christian. That is true. It is true also that, in such a complex set of teachings as those contained in the innumerable Hindu books (including Jain, Buddhist, Vaishnava etc., scriptures), there are many elements which are a to be found also in Christianity. Others will say that there are a great deal of Hindu elements (or Buddhist elements) which have creeped into Christianity, and there are theories to prove this influence of Indian thought. And one may safely assure that the failure of Christian preaching among the educated and fully conscious Hindus, is mainly due to the existence of these elements. A religion of love is not a new thing to India, as it must have been to the people of ancient Europe.

But all this does not lessen the fact that the Hindu religion, both as a set of philosophies and as a cult, *has also* the characteristics which Aryan Paganism had, before it was overcome by Christianity in the

West. We find here, like in ancient Greece, contrary philosophical tendencies, with a very few main common ideas between them (such as the idea of transmigration of souls, for instance, and one or two others). And, what is more, we find in Hindu cult, *in Hindu life*, that essential thing, which is the only one worth living for: Beauty.

* * *

Visible beauty leads to the invisible, says Plato.

Nowadays, when people speak of India, they seem to speak too much of its invisible beauty, and to ignore the visible. "Spirituality, spirituality...." They all talk of it, those who know something about it, and those who know nothing. It is the fashion. One does not look like a friend of India, if one does not put stress on that point. Nor does one feel like a true Indian patriot.

But nobody puts stress upon the physical beauty of the Hindu people. Yet *they* are Hinduism, *they* are India, more than all the philosophies put together; and the first qualification, for a nation as well as for an individual, is the beauty of its body. No mean soul can reside in a really beautiful body. The body expresses, *reflects* the interior self. And a beautiful race is a noble race, with high possibilities. People speak of Hindu culture as of an abstract entity, as if it could have grown anywhere and everywhere. They forget to say that those who live it, as a nation, are amongst the most beautiful races of mankind. There is, no doubt, a mysterious identity between that culture and them.

To a great number of Hindus, the Hindu ritual has a great symbolical value. To the large majority of the Hindus, it is practically everything. Yet, nobody puts stress upon the visible beauty of the Hindu daily "puja," of the Hindu festivities, of the Hindu ceremonies. Many educated Hindus seem to think it below their dignity to praise, in their religion, what appeals to one's eyes and ears, what is "exterior."

But it is not possible to deny the attraction of beauty.

We have mentioned the burning regret of the past, among some Western Aryans, who seem to have a retrospective consciousness of what their race was, and an idea of what perhaps it could have been still, had their ancestors been faithful to the old national cults of Europe. This nostalgia for the past is not a new thing in the Christian West and Near East. It begins sixteen hundred years ago, with the desperate attempt of the Emperor Julian to restore the religion and society of the "Ancient World" to their former splendour, and it increases, in the heart of the few, as the "Ancient World," seen from a greater distance of time, seems more and more lovable.

This Ancient World had its shortcomings. It had its vices also, which brought its down-fall. But its wise men were the pride of human intelligence. And above all, it is lovable for what Europe and the Near East have never known since: the open cult of Visible Beauty.

This cult is to be found nowhere, nowadays, except in to last sunny home: Hindu India.

* * *

It is said that, one day, Julian tried to organise a procession through the streets of Constantinople, in honour of Dionysos, the God of impetuous Joy, and overflowing Life.

But it was already too late, and the attempt proved a failure. The procession was but a ridiculous show, and when returning, at evening, after it was finished, Julian was as sad as if his eyes had embraced the whole gloomy future of the Mediterranean World. It is said that he was sitting in the gardens of his palace, in front of old blocks of marble, half-hidden with ivy, when a faithful friend, guessing the cause of his sadness, asked him: "What else did you expect? These are the days of our death. What was your aim, in ordering this procession? *What did you want*?" The Emperor looked at him silently; then, pulling aside the ivy, he pointed out to him what was behind: a master-piece of some artist of the ancient days: a procession in honour of Dionysos, carved out in white marble; a smile of the World's youth; a thing of beauty: "This is what I wanted."

* * *

This was at the time when the great Samudra Gupta was ruling over India.

Oh! if only Julian could have seen what a display of beauty, in daily life and in festivities, and in processions in honour of Gods and Goddesses much akin to his, was going on, over there! If only he could have seen that Aryan Paganism would live and flourish forever, in that luxuriant land; that India would preserve the World's youth from age to age,

through an endless future!

Then, certainly, he would have blessed the great country, with tears of joy.

Just go to Madura or to Rameswaram, nowadays, and see a real Hindu procession there, with elephants bearing immemorial signs of sandal and vermillion upon their foreheads, and draperies of silk and gold flowing over their backs, down to the ground; with flutes and drums, and torches reflecting their light upon the half-naked bronze bodies, as beautiful as living Greek statues; with chariots of flowers, slowly going around the sacred tank. Just see the pious crowd (hundreds and thousands of pilgrims, gathered from all parts of India), throwing flowers, as the chariots pass. And above all this, above the calm waters, the beautiful crowd, the mighty pillars, the huge pyramidal towers, shining in the moon-light ... above all this, behold the one, simple, phosphorescent sky.

Just watch an ordinary scene of Hindu life: a line of young women walking into a temple, on a festival day. Draped in bright coloured sarees, sparkling with jewels, one by one they come, the graceful daughters of India, with flowers in their hair, with flowers and offerings in their hands. In the background: thatched huts, among the high coconut trees and green rice-fields all around—the beauty of the Indian countryside.

One by one they come ... like the Athenian maidens of old, whose image we see upon the prize of the Parthenon. The lover of Beauty, Julian, the Sunworshipper, if only he could have seen them, would have said, beholding the reality of his own

dream: "This is what I wanted!"

* * *

But it is not through the forms and colours of popular Hindu cult alone that Hinduism is a religion of beauty. Its conception of God, creative *and* destructive, is the expression of a broad artistic outlook on life and on the universe.

In creedal religions, the centre of interest is man; the background, man's short history, man's misery, man's craving for happiness; the scope, man's salvation. God, man's Father, has a particular, and somewhat partial tenderness towards this privileged creature of His.

In intelligent Hinduism, this anthropomorphic view has no place. The centre of interest is this eternal universe of Existence, in which man is only a detail. God is the inner Force, the deeper Self, the Essence of that Existence—the "Greatest Soul." (Paramatma).

No personal likings and dislikings, in Him. No special favour to any of the creatures that appear and pass away, in the course of time. Nothing but an endless succession of infinite states, of infinite expressions of the unknown Thing, which is the reality of all things; a dancing succession of birth and death and rebirth, over and over again, which is never the same, and yet, is always the same; a play, (lila) which has no beginning nor end, nor purpose, but *which is beautiful*, whatever may be the temporary fate of any particular species, in its course.

The fate of all species, of all individuals, is to grow

slowly more and more conscious of the beauty of the Play, and, at end, to experience their substantial identity with the Force which is playing—playing with its own Self. Nobody knows what this Force is, except those who have realised it in themselves. But we all adore It, and bow down to It. We do not bow down to It because we know It, and because It is God. *It is because we bow down to It, that we call It God.* And we bow down to It and worship It, in its millions and millions of expressions (those which destroy us, as well as those which seem to help us), because, in its millions and millions of expressions, *It is beautiful.*

* * *

Creation is only half the Play of Existence. Men thus generally worship only one side of God. But the Hindus praise Him all round, for the beauty of His Play. They praise Him in Destruction, as well as in Creation. They praise His Energy (Shakti) in Mother Kali, in Durga, in Jagaddatri, in Chinnamasta, continuously destroying and recreating Her own Self; in all the ten "Mahavidyas," who are one and the same. They praise Him in the Dancing King (Nataraj), whose feet are over-treading life, and destroying it in a furious rhythm, ... while His dispassionnate face, expressing Knowledge, is as calm as the smiling sea.

Creation and destruction are one, to the eyes who can see beauty.

And the greatest praise to India is this: not only are her people beautiful; not only are her daily life and cult beautiful; but, in the midst of the utilitarian,

humanitarian, dogmatic world of the present day, she keeps on proclaiming the outstanding value of Beauty for the sake of Beauty, through her very conception of Godhead, of religion and of life.

Chapter 4

# The Defence of Hindudom

## A DANGER SIGNAL

The last stronghold of living Aryan Paganism· India

But how long is India going to last? That is to say: how long is Hindudom going to last in India?

To one who lives in the South, near one of those gorgeous temples that are India's pride, in the midst of the most intense Hindu life, such a question must seem strange What is the danger? A few Untouchables who are every day becoming Christians, and who generally remain, in society, as Untouchable as before? They do not count. Mohammadans? They are three per cent, four per cent of the whole population. And they do not look as if they are increasing. They have no power, and create no trouble. Hindudom can last forever.

One who lives in Orissa, where Mohammadans are two per cent, can think the same. In Bihar, Mohammadans are ten per cent; they are thirteen per cent, in the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh; less than five per cent in the Central Provinces; six per cent, in some parts of West Bengal (such as Midnapur district). There also, one can think the same.

But what about Punjab, the cradle of Aryan culture

in India? And what about Bengal, the home of Indian culture in the present day, if we except its western districts? Punjab, at least, has got the Sikhs who, in case of trouble, will stand like one man and fight for Hindudom. Bengal has no equivalent of the Sikhs yet, and its condition is worse.

As far as a census report written in India can be correct, the latest figures, which are supposed to give a picture of Bengal in 1931, are impressive. In West Bengal, the Hindus are in majority; but in North and East Bengal they seem to be, according to the tragic words of a Bengali author, "a dying race."

Just see their proportion, compared to the Mohammadan population, in a few districts:

| *District* | | *Hindus* | *Muslims* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Rangpur | (roughly) | 746,000 | 1,836,300 |
| Bogra | " | 178,000 | 905,000 |
| Pabna | " | 332,000 | 1,112,000 |
| Mymensingh | " | 1,164,000 | 3,927,000 |
| Dacca | " | 1,100,000 | 2,200,000 |
| Faridpur | " | 847,000 | 1,507,000 |
| Tipperah | " | 750,000 | 2,356,000 |
| Noakhali | " | 366,000 | 1,339,000 |
| Chittagong | " | 392,000 | 1,326,000 |
| Barisal | " | 812,000 | 2,135,000 |
| Nadia | " | 574,000 | 944,000 |
| Jessore | " | 634,000 | 1,035,000 |

The whole Hindu population of Bengal is, roughly, 22 millions. The whole Mohammadan population, 28 millions. And if one adds to that the Mohammadans of the Bengali speaking border district of Assam (Sylhet district), one gets a figure approaching 30 millions, which is, practically, one half of the whole Mohammadan population of British India (not including the Indian States).

The Mohammadan population of Bengal alone is more than the double of that of present-day Turkey. And the Mohammadan population of just one of the districts of Bengal (Mymensingh district) is more than half that of whole Arabia.

But however impressive figures may be, the sight of the Bengali countryside is much more impressive.

There are regions where one can walk miles and miles without meeting a single Hindu. There is no racial difference between the boat-men on the rivers, the peasants in the fields, and the boat-men and peasants from other parts of Bengal. They speak Bengali; they are Bengalis. If not for their beard, and the coloured "lunghi" they wear, instead of a white "dhoti," you would never take them for anything else but Hindus. Yet, their collective consciousness is not that of the Hindus. Their diet differs. Their outlook differs. They are firm believers in an undiscussed so-called absolute "truth," in an international creed, fixed, once forever, in a book. And they are ready to believe that their ancestors have come from the country far away, where the Book was first given by God to mankind.

You reach a village—one of those lovely villages of East Bengal, made of huts of bamboo, scattered

amidst a thick green jungle and a few tanks full of pink and white lotuses—and you inquire of its name. The name will be Krishnapur, Kalipur, Sitarampur, or some other Hindu name like that. But how many Hindus are there in the village? Not one. Or perhaps, yes, there may be a few: half a dozen fishermen, a barber, a washerman, who through ignorance, through need, and through the pressure of the environment, will be Musulmans, in a generation or two, or less than that.

The "zamindar" and the money-lender were and are still generally Hindus. But their position in the village is growing more and more precarious.

* * *

An object of admiration for an outsider, in a Bengali village, are the learned Brahmans (the "Pandits") and in general, the educated men, among the high caste Hindus. They may not know much more of the wide world outside, than the literate villagers of France or England do. But they are so much more refined, cultured, in the deep sense of the word. It is a pleasure to argue with pandits, for long hours, on some abstract subject, and hear them come out, every now and then, with a harmonious quotation, in Sanskrit, from the Holy Scriptures. (They seem to know the Scriptures by heart). They will entertain you in the open, under a bunch of high trees, or else, in a little room, with walls of bamboo, where there is nothing else but a mat to sit upon, and several old books. They have the sweet temper and amiable manners of people who have

been aristocrats since the beginning of the world. They are poor, and spotlessly clean. And by coming in contact with them, one feels like discovering an untouched spot of ancient India.

When one has been walking for miles and miles, or sailing for hours and hours along the broad streams of Bengal, crossing places with Hindu names and ninety percent Mohammadan population, it is refreshing to stop in a village where there are, at least, one or two pandits, and have a talk with them. There is such an atmosphere of serene Hindu life all about them, that one takes to hoping once more. They may also tell you, in their beautiful language, with Sanskrit quotations from several "shastras", and commentaries upon the shastras, that Hinduism is eternal ("Sanatan Dharma").

You will learn, at the same time, that during the last month, a "namasudra" of the village, and two "malis," from a village five miles away, have become Mohammadans. But it seems that the loss of those low-caste people does not injure Hinduism's eternity.

* * *

In towns, the proportion of Hindus is undoubtedly greater than in villages. Yet, there are quarters in Dacca and in Chittagong, where the number of bearded men that you cross in the streets, wearing a red "tupi" upon their head, makes you feel as if you were in Cairo or in Bagdad, not in India.

The educated Hindus, who are numerous, keep Hindu tradition and Hindu culture alive in their homes. While sitting with them, you feel you are in

India; in fact, you *are* in India still. But the masses are getting day by day more Mohammadanised.

And if you speak of this to the educated Hindus of Dacca or of Chittagong, they may also tell you, like the learned village Brahmans, that another name for Hinduism is "Sanatan Dharma." They are accustomed to see bearded men walking about the streets, with red "tupis" upon their heads. They have never seriously inquired to what extent the number of these men is increasing. Nor have they ever troubled to find out, by what mysterious mental process a Hindu (one of their own people), suddenly makes up his mind to grow his beard, and wear a "tupi," and call himself a Musulman; by what mysterious mental process he *actually becomes* a Musulman, with a full-grown Musulman consciousness, ready to stand against the Hindus, at the first call.

They will tell you that those Musulmans are nothing but low caste Hindus converted once upon a time to Islam; which is *generally* true. They will tell you that *quality* is to be sought more than quantity, which is always true; but which is not the *only* truth about the Hindu-Moslem problem in India, and specially in Bengal—far from it.

* * *

The old controversy of "quality" versus "quantity," and the idea of "eternal" Hinduism, are brought in owing to the same fallacy. In both cases there is, at the back of the mind, a confusion between two planes: one, concerning ideas as such (the plane of "truth,"

which is beyond time and space) and the other, concerning action and success, that is to say, our ordinary historical plane, in which time and space are everything.

Truth is eternal, no doubt. It does not depend upon the number of those who accept it. An increasing number of those who accept it, does not prove *it* to be *more true*. Nor does the display of their spirit of sacrifice or of any other qualities of character; it bears witness in *their* favour, as strong and faithful men, *but adds nothing to, and alters by no means the "truth"* (or untruth) *of what they profess*. A martyr never *proves*, by his death, that *truth* for which he dies; he only proves his own personal consistency, and that is all he can do.

Beauty, perfection, and all other abstract entities of the same sort, are equally eternal. So it is mere waste of time to defend *them*; they take care of themselves. "Eternal" Hinduism (that is to say, *the truth* expressed in the innumerable "shastras" and "sutras," etc., the wisdom of the Upanishads, the splendour of the Vedic hymns) will, in the same way, take care of itself. No need defending *it*. Would all India profess Islam, tomorrow; would it even disappear wholesale, in some formidable cataclysm, that would make no difference: the enlightened world would preserve the Hindu Scriptures, because they are worth preserving.

And even if it did not preserve them, it would slowly rediscover the truth contained in them. So, in any way, it is no good troubling about the fate of the *tenets* of Hinduism. *They are not in danger.*

It is *the Hindus, as a nation, who are in danger of extinction,* at least in certain parts of India. It is Hindudom, not Hinduism, that *we defend.* For if Hinduism is "sanatan" (eternal), nothing proves that Hindudom is also. The numerical and political strength of Hindudom would not add anything to *the value* of Hinduism as such, no doubt. But reversely, the value of Hinduism will not save Hindudom, if Hindudom is not strong, numerically and politically.

The truth contained in Plato's writings is still true. But it did not keep the ancient Greek society and civilisation from passing away. The beauty of Hypatia's life did not save Pagandom in Alexandria.

* * *

When one goes about in the North and East of Bengal (not to speak of the other places in India where the Hindus are less than 25% of the total population), one realises, to a great extent, what a fully conscious Greek Pagan must have felt like, in his own country, during the early Middle Ages, when Christendom was growing to power day by day.

Because Christianity has finished by winning, people, nowadays, speak a lot of the persecutions against the first Christians, and do not speak so much about the oppression of the last Pagans by the Christians. Works of art destroyed, festivities stopped, schools of philosophy shut down, wise men exiled: all this marked the rising of Christianity to the dignity of a State religion, from the days of Constantine the 1st to the days of Justinian. But, however bitter it may seem to us, who look upon these

facts from a distance of fifteen hundred years, all this must have been nothing, compared with the growing tyranny exercised by the Christians (day by day more numerous, and stronger, owing to government support as well as to their number), upon the decreasing minority of Pagans, in the towns and villages of Greece, Asia-Minor, Egypt, Italy, etc.

The fate of learned and virtuous Hypatia, barbarously put to death by fanaticised Christian monks, fills us with indignation. But Hypatia was not the only one, certainly. There must have been frequent Christian-Pagan riots, in those days, on the occasion of public teaching of Grecian philosophy, or of peaceful processions in honour of the Gods of old, until every free voice was finally made silent, and every public manifestation of Pagan life stopped forever.

To stop Pagan life was not an easy thing. To a certain extent, Pagan life and Pagan festivities continued in the garb of Christianity. (A look at the Christian Church will tell you that.) But apart from this, it is said that, in remote villages of Greece, and in Crete, there were still, in the eleventh century A.D, a few people who openly professed their ancient national religion; and "the last of the Neo-Platonicians," Gemistos Plethon, was living in Greece in the fifteenth century A.D. (Distant Northern Europe, less conscious of the possibilities of its warrior-like Paganism, accepted the Gospel much quicker and more seriously than the Mediterranean World, though it came much later in contact with Christianity.)

It would be instructive, for the Hindus of the present day, to meditate upon the fate of the Western Aryan civilisations, in the early days of Christian power. The few learned "pandits," who still keep on representing "eternal Hinduism," in East Bengal villages where 90 percent of the people are Mohammadans, had their parallel in the West, eight or nine hundred years ago, in the shape of a few wise men who kept on, for a long time, representing "eternal Grecian thought," alone in the midst of a hostile, or at least most contemptuous Christian majority.

* * *

"Grecian thought" is living still. *Grecian Paganism*, as a thing of beauty and of truth, *is* eternal. But Grecian Pagandom seems to have passed away forever.

In India, temples have been destroyed in many places; but Hindu life is there still.

Greece is covered with gorgeous ruins. Upon the steep promontories, there are still rows of white columns, looking over the blue sea, full of isles. There are blocks of sculptured marble, and old statues to be found even in the market place. But living life all around, runs on different lines. The national Gods have become objects of admiration in museums. Foreigners come from America to see them. But nobody worships them. There are no Panathenian processions, in pomp and glory, going up the Acropolis today.

The same thing can be said about Italy. For true Christianity's misfortune, a lot of Pagan show may have invaded the Church. But Paganism was not a mere show. There was also something else in it, which is gone, now, from Italy as well as from Greece; there was the national consciousness of Pagandom.

The same thing can be said about Egypt, the land that perhaps looked the most like India, *once*, long long ago; the land where the sacred Bull was worshipped, and where people used to regard the "Old Father Nile," whose life-giving waters flew down from Heaven, just as the Hindus look still upon holy Mother Ganges.

Nowadays, along the banks of the Nile, there are Pyramids, and temples, and huge statues of pink granite representing kings and Gods of old. But those who dwell in the very shadow of these ruins are Mohammadans; a few of them are Christians. There are some of them who work as guides, for there are many foreigners to visit Egypt. They take the Americans around, among the gigantic pillars and blocks of stone, and tell them: "This was the temple of Phtah .... This is the image of that God .... This is the image of Mout, his consort etc." They tell them which king built the temple. They ask them to notice the beauty of the images. They show them the glory of Egypt, conscientiously. But that glory of their ancestors is not *their* glory. *They* are the children of another nation, grown upon the ruins. The same land; but *another nation*. The same stones, but without their meaning. The same Nile, but without the Nile-cult.

* * *

We heard of a modern Pagan who visited Egypt only a few years back. The first thing he did was to walk down to the Nile, to throw a few flowers in its current, to stoop and drink a little of its water, and pour a handful of it over his head. "Old Father Nile, you are beautiful. And you give life to millions of creatures. Yet, since how many centuries has nobody bowed down to you, nobody offered you his worship? *I* bow down to you, I, all by myself."

And while he was saying this within his mind, a thought came to him: far away beyond the burning sands, far away beyond the sea, there is a Land where they have not forgotten; there is India, who still bows down to Mother Ganges, the last of the great sacred Rivers. Glory to India!

* * *

That is Hindudom seen in its strength, from a distance.

When one sees Hindudom in its weakness, yielding every day to hostile forces, losing bit by bit its numerical advantages, losing its political rights in India, losing its place as a nation, then one becomes more sceptical. One takes to thinking that the fate of Pagan Greece, of Pagan Italy, of Pagan Egypt, today, may be the fate of Pagan India tomorrow. Of course! Take Hindudom in Bengal, for example. In Bengal, the Hindus, not many years ago, were 55 per cent of the whole population. Now they are only 45 per cent. In two hundred years' time, who knows in what proportion they will be? And, in five hundred years' time (nobody knows), there may be no Hindus left at

all. Then, one may see a Mohammadan guide (a Bengali, descendant of generations of Bengali Hindus), explaining the deserted temple of Dakshineswar to the American tourists: "This was the temple of Kali, a Goddess of the Hindus ...."

A swarm of mosques will be built here and there, in the place of the minor shrines. Mohammadan life and European life combined, will make unrecognisable India look much like modern Egypt. Cultured Indians will look upon their national Gods, as Christian Europeans look upon Greek "mythology." And the Ganges will still be flowing. But there will be no ritual bathing in its waters, no pilgrims, going up and down its 'ghats,' no garlands of flowers thrown into it as offerings. India, then, may be free and powerful; but she will no longer be "our" India.

Is it that, what the Hindus want?

* * *

Certainly not. But it is *that* which is coming, if there be no reaction, on the part of the Hindus, *before it is too late*.

We believe that quality is better than quantity. But quality itself cannot grow, where there is no proper atmosphere to develop it. And, with a decreasing number of Hindus, the Hindu "atmosphere" of India is in peril, in certain parts of India at least. Save it *at once* or else.... Hindu "quality" will become the priceless treasure of a few individuals, foreigners in their own country. It will no longer be the treasure of a living nation.

Hindudom has reached a stage where it has either to die out, or else, to react vigorously—and then, not merely to survive, but to rule. There is no third alternative.

If Hindudom were to die, India would no longer be India. But what if Hindudom were to react, and rule?

Most Hindus are not deeply interested in their vital today's problem: to live or to die, just because they cannot imagine vividly enough what it means *to live. To live, for a nation, means: to rule.* And, as the Hindu leaders repeat, *the Hindus are a nation,* not a community. They are a nation that is not conscious of its existence, but that still *is* a nation, just as a man is still himself, while asleep. Nobody can tell what would happen, if the Hindus were to awake.

First, future free India would be a reconquered Hindu India. But what beyond that?

Imagine a well-organised Hindu India, having in her hands all the power of a modern country of her size. Hindudom, once, used to extend over what is now Afghanistan, over Java, over Cambodia etc. The wife of Dhritarashtra was a princess from Gandahar, that is to say Afghanistan, and the remotest kings of Java, Cambodia etc. were Indian kings. Powerful Hindu India could reconquer these lands and give them back the pride of their Indian civilisation. She could make Greater India once more a cultural reality, and a political one too—why not?

And further still (who knows?), she could spread her name, assert her strength, establish her glory, wherever there are lands with a great culture that has been forsaken, lands waiting to be given back to

themselves. She could teach the fallen Aryans of the West the meaning of their forgotten Paganism; she could rebuild the cults of Nature, the cults of Youth and Strength, wherever they have been destroyed; she could achieve on a world-scale what Emperor Julian tried to do, what the Sun-God himself, through his oracle of Delphi, had declared impossible. And the victorious Hindus could erect a statue to Julian, somewhere in conquered Europe, on the border of the sea; a statue, with an inscription, both in Sanskrit and in Greek:

*"What thou hast dreamt,*
*We have achieved."*

* * *

This all may be nothing but imagination. Any how, imagination is necessary to accomplish great things. It helps you to look above temporary distress, and fight with joy.

Between the dark picture of an India who would no longer be herself, and the glorious vision of *real* Greater India, that is to say, Greater Hindudom, let the Hindus choose, today. We say: *today,* for there is a time when things that seem impossible *are yet possible*. When that time is gone, then it is too late. Tomorrow may be too late even to save Hindudom in North and East Bengal, not to speak of rebuilding the world, through the might and inspiration of Greater Hindudom.

Chapter 5

# Social Reforms

As we have said, the beauty of Hinduism, its high philosophy, the art it has developed, the possibilities it contains, nothing of all this will save Hindudom, no more than the beauty of Grecian Paganism and its wonderful growth of free thought could save the civilisation and society of ancient Greece.

The greatest gift of Hinduism to mankind is perhaps the religious sanction of free scientific thought, based, in all matters, upon experience alone. But a man can be a free thinker, and even a "realised" man, without being a Hindu. The greatest gift of Hinduism to present-day India may be the possibility, for her, of expressing her reborn nationalism through a vast national cult. But nothing proves that a *future* Indian will not be a nationalist, unless he remains a Hindu. *His* India would not be *our* India; but *he* would love it all the same, perhaps more than his religion, one day. (Are there not modern Romans, who put their nation far above Christianity? The future men of a hypothetical Mohammadan India might also put India above Islam. Nobody can tell before hand).

Therefore, to point out Hinduism as the highest synthesis of religious thought, on one hand, and on the other, as the cult of India, is not sufficient. All

this talk is well and good, when addressed to such Hindus who never even dreamt of leaving their fold. But in that case, it is useless; its only result can be to make these Hindus a little more proud of themselves.

When addressed to Hindus who have become Christians or Mohammadans, the argument presenting Hinduism as a scientific religion has no effect, for reason is seldom the motive that brings about a man's conversion. The call of Indian nationalism is also without response. To a Hindu who leaves his fold, there are things dearer than India.

Before trying to defend Hinduism by arguments, one must try to understand *why* do Hindus desert the Hindu fold.

* * *

If the Hindus who leave their fold, were leaving it for religious reasons, they would be fools, for whatever is contained in any other religion, is to be found in this vast and complex and apparently contradictory record of religious experience, which is Hinduism. A Hindu does not become a Mohammadan for the advantage of worshipping one God alone. That, he could do, while remaining a Hindu. Nor does he, for the advantage of considering God as formless; many Hindus consider God as formless, and worship without the help of images.

Nor does a Hindu become a Christian for the satisfaction of following a personal Saviour, for that he could do, while remaining a Hindu. Moreover, that very Saviour he is attracted to, Lord Jesus, he could worship and honour without leaving the Hindu fold.

In more than one Hindu home, Lord Jesus has found a place. His image is garlanded, and offered incense, among other images. Still no Hindu thinks of excluding his worshippers from the Hindu society, as long as they, themselves, do not express the desire of being excluded. One of the signs of Hindu generosity lies in this broad-mindedness. A Hindu who pays homage to Christ is still a Hindu, while a Christian who would pay homage to Lord Krishna, along with Christ, would no longer be a Christian. The God of the Christians remains the "jealous God" of the Jews, inspite of all the Greek metaphysics that have influenced Christian theology.

One may think that many ignorant Hindus leave the Hindu fold, persuaded that they are doing so for religious reasons.

It is true that ignorance is the source of all trouble, and that nothing would stop the flow of conversion of Hindus to other religions, as well as the intelligent teaching of what Hinduism *really is,* to all Hindus, including the most depressed ones, throughout the length and breadth of India. Ignorant Hindus, recently converted to Christianity, will tell you that Christ is the first one in the world to have taught love to mankind. They know nothing of the immense love of Lord Buddha, nor of Krishna; nothing of all what India had given the world, centuries before Christ.

That is true. But one must not believe that, in every case, or even in most cases, *if they had known*, then, they would not have left the Hindu fold. Even ignorant Hindus do not leave their fold *for religious reasons*. It is neither because human brotherhood was preached "for the first time" by the Prophet of Arabia,

that they become Mohammadans, nor because love was preached "for the first time" by Jesus of Nazareth, that they become Christians. It is because, to become a Mohammadan means, *to them, now,* to enjoy the advantages of social brotherhood, in a society which actually practices it; and to become a Christian means, *to them, now,* to enjoy the advantages of some charitable missionary's love. *It is for social reasons*, and, practically, *for social reasons alone*, that thousands of Hindus have abandoned the Hindu fold.

* * *

Three main things have been, during these last centuries, the cause of an enormous numerical loss for Hindudom:

(1) The denial of elementary social rights to the majority of the Hindus.

(2) The strictness of social rules, within the Hindu fold (resulting in the too easy outcasting of transgressors).

(3) The refusal of the Hindu fold to re-accept those who wish *to come back* to it, not to speak of those who may wish to join it, without themselves or their forefathers having belonged to it before.

Unless and until these three main causes of disintegration are removed, Hindudom will not be able to face the increasing dangers to which it is exposed. And, if it cannot remove these sources of weakness, Hindudom, inspite of its value, will ultimately be crushed. This is the bitter truth that

must be spoken, and understood *at once and now*; tomorrow might be too late.

* * *

We have mentioned many times the similarity between the present state of Hindudom, wherever it is "a dying race," and the state of Grecian and Roman Pagandom, during the days it was also dying. We may add that the causes of death were about the same.

May the Hindus of present India never forget that it is *for social reasons, and practically, for social reasons alone,* that Christianity was able to spread all over the Western Aryan World, and settle itself upon the ruins of some of the finest civilisations that mankind had produced.

During the days in which the first Christian missionary propaganda was going on, the "Ancient World" had the most remarkable personalities, and the finest schools of thought. None of the illiterate Apostles, who are said to be God-inspired, nor their learned Greek successors could compete with such men as Porphyros, Iamblikhos, or Plotinos, who were both profoundly learned and God-inspired, if there be any such thing as heavenly inspiration at all. And no Christian woman was purer than Hypatia, the embodiment of all Pagan virtues, wisdom and beauty, in a feminine shape.

Yet, the Galileans have won, not the Hellenes. Why?

(Think of this, and rebuild Hindudom in its glory.) The Galileans have won–not because they were wise,

not because they were virtuous, not because they brought with them a greater and higher inspiration than that of the last Hellene Pagans, but because they called *all* men (including Barbarians and slaves) to share their brotherhood, while the Hellenes did not.

* * *

The ancient Greek and Roman society was not a complicated caste-ridden society, like Hindudom. Yet there was, in it, a tremendous gap between the free man and the slave. There was also a tremendous gap between the Hellene (or the Roman) and the so-called Barbarian. With a very few later exceptions (perhaps due to the influence of growing Christianity), the born Barbarian had no place in the social life of the Hellenes. He was a foreigner, and it was admitted that a foreigner could not be assimilated on equal terms. To take part in the games of Olympia, for instance, Greek culture was not enough; one had also to prove his Hellenic *descent*. There might have been breaches to this rule during the later days; but the principle stood until the end. And the principle was enough to prevent the wholesale assimilation of outsiders.

In the same way, the son of a slave had no share in the glory of what was Hellenism. In Athens at least, he was not illtreated. He was allowed to thrive and multiply. This is so true that, in what is considered the golden age of the city (fifth century B.C.) there were about fifteen thousand free citizens, in Athens, and about one hundred and twenty thousand slaves.

As time passed, this numerical disproportion grew greater. The free citizens would cultivate eloquence and every art, first of all, the art of being beautiful, both in body and soul; they would talk with the wise men, honour the Gods, and rule the city; they would leave philosophical systems, marble temples, and the history of Greece, for the future generations to admire. But the slaves had all the hard, weary, and dirty work to do, without feeling that the glory of the city was also theirs. The Gods of the city were theirs; but the sublime teachings of the wise men were not addressed to them; and they knew nothing, either of the value of Hellenic philosophy, or of the qualities of the Gods. They knew that they were born for servile labour, while others were born for leisure and higher thought, and all the possibilities of a more beautiful life. Slowly came a time when they began to consider their fate as a burden, and their sub-conscious mind was then prepared for revolt.

Paul and the first Christian missionaries came over, at that time, from Palestine. And, from the Jewish quarters of the Grecian sea-ports, the new teaching spread to the crowd of the slaves, throughout the Roman Empire; to the Barbarians, north and south; to all those who were denied equality: "All men are one, in our Lord Jesus Christ, the one and only Saviour."

Nobody denies the existence of people of high education and noble birth, among the early Christian converts. But they were a small minority. The victory of Christianity appears mainly as the result of a widespread non-violent revolt of the slaves, as well as of the Barbarians, against the existing social order of

the Roman Empire (including, naturally, Pagan Greece).

Had the social order been changed *in time*, and by the initiative of the privileged Pagans themselves, no doubt, then, history would have been quite different. Slaves and half-hellenised Barbarians, vividly conscious that the cultural and national treasures of Pagandom were *theirs*, would have stood like one man on the side of Pagandom. But if one had spoken of social reforms *then*, to the learned, refined and few, to the aristocracy of the Graeco-Roman World, it is probable that the few would have answered just the same as many Hindus of noble birth, in India, do today: "Are *we* to renounce our birth rights? Are *we* to allow our immemorial traditions to be spoiled by the contact of low-born people and of Barbarians? We rely upon our value, not upon numerical strength, to save ourselves and our culture."

What is the result? They have passed away, and Western Aryan Paganism with them, wholesale. Is there anyone *now*, in Europe, who can truly trace his descent from a noble family of ancient Greece or Rome, through an unbroken thread of pure-blooded generations? Is there a single modern Roman, a single modern Greek, who can earnestly assure, *now*, that among his ancestors there are no slaves and no Barbarians? No. When the new society came into existence, then the birthrights that used to rule the old were forgotten, and all was but confusion, until new privileges and new birthrights creeped in, inspite of Christianity itself.

So, what was the use of standing against the pressure of time and being crushed? To make place

for a hypocritical Christian Europe, who would first destroy half the treasures of Pagan cult, art and thought, and then, preserve the other half in its museums? That was really not worth while.

* * *

The fate of the European Pagans, fifteen hundred years ago, is the fate awaiting the Hindus of the present day, sooner or later, in all parts of India where their number is less than at least seventy-five percent of the total population. In those parts where they are less than twenty or twenty-five percent, wholesale extinction (through willful or compulsory exile, through conversion to Islam, or otherwise) is not far away if, *at once and now,* the Hindus do not make a desperate effort.

(1) *to unite into one firm, invincible bloc, trained in the art of self-defence.*

(2) *to keep all Hindus,* without distinction of caste or creed, *within that bloc.*

(3) *to bring within that bloc all those who can be of some use to Hindudom, specially,*

*the Indian aborigines,*

*the Indians once converted to Islam or to Christianity,*

attracting them to Hinduism, as their own national cult.

* * *

We would like to make it clear that no Hindu is more sensitive than us to the value of that hereditary

refinement that has been, for centuries, the privilege of the high caste Hindus, specially of the Brahmans. There are people even outside India to recognise, in the Indian Brahmans, not merely the oldest, but still the finest aristocracy of our earth. And personally, if we had to pick out a man all round beautiful in appearance, mind, and character, to be the embodiment of superior humanity, we would, without hesitation, pick out an Indian Brahman, and most probably a Bengali, who would add to the virtues of his caste, the enthusiasm and charm of the most lovable nation existing. If India be compared to a vast lotus-pond, the Brahmans as a whole, still today, are its most beautiful, its purest lotuses. The defence of Hindudom means *their* defence. That, we entirely maintain.

But, at the same time, we remember one of the many names of the lotus: "pankaj," that is to say: born in the mud. So mud and water are also necessary; without them, the beautiful lotuses would soon dry up. So the preservation of the spotless flowers means, first of all, the preservation of the pool where they are born and grow, that is to say of the fertile water and mud.

In the same way, Brahmanical beauty, Brahmanical culture, Brahmanical ideals, will mean nothing in the future Indian society, wherever that society will be cent percent Mohammadan. And that will be the case of North and East Bengal, in a few years' time, if the flow of conversion of Islam is not immediately stopped, and a contrary current of reconversion to Hinduism, not immediately started. And this is not possible without an enormous amount

of sacrifice, on the part of the high caste Hindus; sacrifice, not in the name of "humanity," not in the name of "justice" or of "democracy" (*we* do not believe in "democracy" at all) but, in the name *of their own self-preservation.* The alternative before the high caste Hindus—nay, before *all Hindus,* wherever they are, not an overwhelming numerical majority — is this: sacrifice caste prejudices *at once* and live, and, one day, rule India once more; or else, stick to caste prejudices, and, under the pressure of a formidable tide, growing every day, become Mohammadans in a generation or two.

Let the Hindus choose.

* * *

"*To what extent* must caste prejudices be sacrificed, to save Hindudom?" will many say. Does the sacrifice of caste prejudices mean merely to get rid of Untouchability, and open the temples to all Hindus? Does it mean that high caste Hindus should take water from every Hindu? Does it mean that they should also take rice? Does it mean that inter-caste marriages should be allowed? Where is the limit? (if there be any limit to such concessions).

There is no answer to these questions, *in detail.* Means of defence have to be in proportion with the danger to face; so everything depends upon the danger. It is certain that in Midnapur district (West Bengal) where Mohammadans are only six percent, the problem facing the Hindus is not so tragic as in Bogra district, for instance where the Mohammadans are more than ninety percent. The Midnapur Hindus

can afford to wait, uninjured, another fifty years. The Bogra Hindus cannot; nor can those of Pabna, nor of Rangpur, nor of Dacca, nor of Noakhali, nor of Comilla, nor of Chittagong etc., in one word, all those of North and East Bengal, from Jalpaiguri, down to the Bay of Bengal, and to the frontiers of Burma and Assam; nor can the Hindus of Assam, where, along with Mohammadan propaganda, a well carried on and lavishly financed Christian missionary effort is continuing for the last few decades, throughout the hill tracts; nor can the Hindus of any part of India, where a strong, conscious, casteless society has grown or is growing to existence, by the side of caste-ridden Hindudom. Whether caste-ridden or sect-ridden, or compartmented in any other way, *never and nowhere,* in history, has a divided society stood competition with an undivided one.

To what extent must caste prejudices be sacrificed? That *we* cannot tell; it is a matter of every day's application in every Hindu household, to be decided by the Hindus themselves, who earnestly wish to live. We can only say this much: the forces that are cooperating to crush Hindudom (if possible) are of such a nature, and the danger is so imminent, that *it is now too late for any kind of patch-work.* From what castes, considered up to this day as contaminating the purity of the higher castes, through water, will all Hindus agree, henceforth, to accept water? Such a question has no meaning. The bitterness of the down-trodden castes of Hindudom has reached such a depth, and the unconditioned equality offered to them, outside Hindudom, is so increasingly attractive, that it is not by granting them a few

scattered privileges, a few resented concessions, a few uncertain hopes, that it will ever be possible, *now*, to keep them for long within the Hindu fold.

The growing consciousness that it is the upper class Hindus who have unjustly deprived them of their rights, and outrageously exploited them, for so many years, is systematically being intensified, among them, by every democratical movement based upon common class-interest (such as labour movement, peasant movement, etc.) which has appeared in India recently.

The principles put forward in these different "movements," were all imported through a few Indian idealists, belonging mostly to the upper castes of Hindudom. But the result of their preaching is, practically, the rapid formation of a united front of discontented lower caste Hindus *and Mohammadans,* set up, on the basis of common class-interest, to get rid of the privileged Hindus, wholesale. To the grievances of the half-starved peasant, of the tenant, of the labourer, of all the down-trodden ones, against the landlord, the moneylender, the "exploiter" in every form (who is generally known to be a Hindu) the religious fanaticism of the Mohammadan masses, cleverly kindled by the Mawlvis, adds itself most naturally. Now, since class-consciousness has been cultivated among them, no less naturally, and no less easily do the feelings of the low caste Hindu peasants and labourers creep in, mingled with a bitter spirit of revolt. Kept out of contact with upper caste Hindu society for long centuries, they are now rapidly experiencing a social consciousness of their own, a social consciousness apart from what they consider as

Hindudom. That consciousness has no cultural basis; but it has an economic one, which brings, day by day, the down-trodden lower caste Hindus nearer to the Mohammadans. Wherever the Mohammadans are a majority, and specially a majority of peasants and labourers, every democratical movement in India is, finally, a Mohammadan movement.

It is not the acceptance of water, or, occasionally, even of rice, from their hands, that will bring back the awakened Hindus of the low castes to their former submissive attitude. The time of obedience is gone. Everyday, the low caste Hindus are getting more conscious of their importance and of their strength.

The sacrifice of caste prejudices, on the part of the upper caste Hindus *(in their own interest, and in the interest of Hindu culture that they represent)* must be such that the lower castes, including the so-called Untouchables, will gladly use their strength to defend the whole of Hindudom, in case of danger.

* * *

Danger is not far away; in many places already, the Hindus have experienced it in violent riots, in which they have invariably been crushed, owing to their lack of solidarity and to their un-preparedness.

But riots worse than any of those India has seen in the past, may take place in an early future. India is preparing herself for political independence. And it is a fact that no country has passed from foreign domination to free self-government, without going through a period of confusion, in which the old

government is no more, while the new one does not yet effectively exist. No legal protection; no police. Such a state of things may last a month; it may also last a year. We ask the Hindus just to try to imagine what would probably happen to them, in North Bengal, in East Bengal, and wherever they represent less than twenty-five, and sometimes, less than ten percent of the total population, if, for only three days, they were left entirely to the grace of God and to themselves, without the protection of any government or police. What would happen to them in the villages where there are five Hindu families, in the midst of five hundred Mohammadans? And what would be the attitude of the discontented lower caste Hindus *then*, under the combined effect of labour propaganda, indifference to the fate of Hindudom which they do not feel *theirs*, hunger, and the primitive impulse of destruction? Who can assure that they will not side with the Mohammadan comrades, who have the same grievances as themselves, and share the loot with them, before sharing, soon after, the brotherhood of Islam? Who can assure that, on the contrary, *they will* stand by Hindudom, lending their strength to their upper caste compatriots, for the preservation of real India?

But what is "real India" *to them*? What was real Greece and its culture, to the slaves of Greece? And what was real Rome and its glory, to the slaves of Rome?

* * *

The least one can say is that caste privileges and

prejudices, and any social beliefs or social customs should be given up, to the extent that they are, at the present stage of Indian history, a hindrance to the growth of a *united Hindu consciousness,* as well as to the *fighting capacity* of the Hindus as a whole.

As long as *all Hindus* do not feel that within their fold, they are offered more dignity, more justice, and greater possibilities of personal development than without, they will not *all* love their fold; and an increasing number of them will leave it for good. The greater number of those who remain Hindus, will be indifferent to the fate of Hindudom not moving even their little finger to defend it or help it in case of need.

As long as all Hindus do not feel a certain amount of freedom and *social toleration* within their fold, there will be an increasing number of them who will willingly leave the fold to live as they like, or unwillingly be driven out of it, for having shown too much personal independence in social matters. Whoever they may be, good or bad, they are a force that Hindudom cannot afford to lose *now*. The Hindus should remember that, among the most dangerous Mohammadan leaders, there are descendants of Hindus driven out of Hindudom, for whatever good or bad reason it may be. It may have been, and probably *was, once*, a gain for Hindudom to purify itself by outcasting "undesirable" people. But *now* that Hindudom is not the only society in India; now that there are two rival societies by its side, eager to seize every opportunity of harming it directly or indirectly, strictness in social matters only brings loss. It is too easy for an outcasted Hindu, nowadays, to increase

the number of the enemies of Hindudom.

As long as *all Hindus* do not feel that the glory of Hindudom is *their* glory, and its artistic, cultural and spiritual inheritance *their* own treasure, there will be no united Hindu consciousness, no common aim, no common interest, no common enthusiasm, no common love, no solidarity among the Hindus—and no hope for Hindudom. The upper caste Hindus feel that the Vedas, the Upanishads, the Epics, the Shastras, all are theirs. Let such a new atmosphere be created in Hindudom, that every Hindu fisherman may feel that Vyaṣa Deva's *Mahabharata* is also *his*, and be proud of it and of its author.

Then Hindudom will be one and strong.

* * *

As long as the hill-tribes of India (the so-called "animists" etc.) do not feel that *their* primitive forms of worship are one of the innumerable aspects of manifold Hinduism, and that *they* are a part and parcel of manifold Hindudom, their strength is lost to the cause of Hindudom. And it is a pity, for they are sturdy fighters. But they will never feel themselves Hindus unless the Hindus make them feel so, through their behaviour towards them; unless they are treated as Hindus.

In the same way, there will be no possibility of widespread reconversion to Hinduism of those who have left the Hindu fold, as long as it is not well established that, *to the eyes of the born-Hindus of every caste, a reconverted Hindu is a Hindu, just as any of themselves.* Until this is accepted, Hindudom

will remain constantly losing its numerical strength *without the possibility of ever regaining it.* A tragic position, in front of Christendom and Islam!

* * *

The reconversion of Hindus who have left the Hindu fold, is not such an easy matter as it looks.

It presupposes the possibility of accepting any outsider into the Hindu society, if proved worthy. For, the Hindu who has become a Mohammadan, giving up his traditional diet and Hindu habits, is, from the orthodox Hindu point of view, no better, no "purer" than any foreigner. It is not even proved that no mixture of blood has ever taken place, in the family of an Indian whose ancestors were once Hindus. So, logically, if Hindudom, forsaking its orthodoxy, can *take back* such a man, it should be prepared to take in *anyone* who earnestly wishes to join it.

Other religions encourage proselytism because they are *creedal* ones, of which the communal unity is based upon the acceptance of the same "truth" by all their followers. But Hinduism, we have said, is no creed. The unity of Hindudom, if any, is the unity created by a common cultural inheritance, a common civilisation, a common national existence. The principle of conversion to Hinduism would be nothing more nor less than the principle of nationalisation, accepted in all modern countries. Applied here it means: "Whoever is worthy of India *can* become an Indian (that is to say a Hindu), if he likes." So far, apparently, no difficulties.

Practical difficulties come in with the consideration of caste. A Hindu *caste* will not take back one of its members who has spent six months as a Mohammadan. But let us, for sake of argument, suppose it did. To what caste would then a reconverted Hindu belong, whose ancestors had become Mohammadans, say, ten generations back, and who does not know which was their former caste? To what caste would belong a foreigner by birth, who admires Hindu civilisation enough to wish to share it, and who chooses to become a Hindu and an Indian?

Unless this question is answered, any movement in favour of Hindu proselytism is useless.

To give the new-comer a place in Hindu society according to his personal fitness is not even possible, as long as the born-Hindus themselves cannot get a place according to their merit. A reconverted or newly converted Hindu cannot be made a Brahman, whatever may be his knowledge, his culture, his virtues, since such a man as Aurobindo Ghosh is not accepted as a Brahman, in the present state of Hindu society.

* * *

In one word, it is not such and such a detail, such and such a practice, that has to be forsaken, but the whole *social atmosphere* of Hindudom that has to be changed, if Hindudom wishes to live, flourish and rule.

Hindudom can neither be united, nor strengthened, nor expanded, without *the whole-hearted*

*collaboration of millions of people, feeling happy and proud to be Hindus,* that is to say, without the suppression of all what prevents millions of Hindus from feeling happy and proud within their fold; without, also, the suppression of all what prevents, at present, millions of Indians from styling themselves as Hindus and standing by the Hindus.

We do not advocate the suppression of caste-system, but we advocate the suppression of social tyranny, whether it be enforced in the name of the sanctity of caste-system, or of anything else. And there is no doubt that caste must lose its rigidity, if social intolerance is to be got rid of, if the process of conversion of Hindus to other religions is to be stopped, and if conversion and reconversion to Hinduism is to be made possible, in the practical field.

Many Hindus are getting to appreciate the value of Hindu unity. They understand the causes of the weakness of Hindudom, and the immediate necessity of some sort of social changes. But they do not realise the *meaning* of social changes.

The basis of society is the householder's home—not the market-place, nor the tea-shop, nor the tennis ground, nor the public meeting; nor even the temple, but *the home,* the most sacred place on earth, where the Gods and Goddesses worshipped in the temple, were born as men and women. Hindu unity in public festivities, even within the compound of the temples, is no unity if it does not persist, among all Hindus, within each Hindu home. Whatever may be the social reforms necessary to check the disintegration of Hindudom, they must boldly take place *at home*, or

remain of no use. And they should take place, as we have said, *at once, and now,* at least wherever the Hindus are a minority, like in North and East Bengal or a rapidly decreasing majority, like in Assam. Threatened on all sides, Hindudom *cannot afford to wait.*

Chapter 6

# A Change of Mentality Among the Hindus

## THE DEVELOPMENT OF NATIONALISM

The reasons we have just given, to show how necessary immediate social reforms are, among the Hindus, were all drawn from the consideration of the mentality of the Hindus *who leave* their fold. To understand *them*, so as to keep *them* within Hindudom, or to bring *them* back to it, was the main question.

But there is another side of the Hindu problem, no less important than that one; and this concerns the mentality of the Hindus *who remain* Hindus. Unless *they* change their entire outlook, social reforms are impossible; nay, any effort to defend and strengthen Hindudom, amounting to a little more than the construction of temples, "maths" and "goshalas," is impossible, for that effort depends entirely upon *them*.

We do not deny the usefulness of temples, "maths" and "goshalas," but we are persuaded that they are *not sufficient* to unite all the Hindus in one strong body, and to make them invincible. Moreover, the pious purpose for which they are built cannot be

better served than by the constant effort to bring back all Indians to Hindudom, and to make Hindudom a power in the world. More cows than any "goshala" can give shelter to, are saved, now and for generations to come, simply by the reconversion of one Mohammadan family to Hinduism. And cow-slaughter will not be suppressed, all over Hindusthan, unless and until the Hindus become strong enough *to rule.*

* * *

Political power (that is to say the power of law, with organised military force at the back of it) is everything in this world. It is speaking against the evidence of history to speak of religions competing on the ground of philosophy or of moral or spiritual merit. A religion gains followers when its followers get political power in hand. Philosophy, morality, and spirituality have no voice in the matter. Christianity began to be an invincible power when it became the religion of people who, for the time being, at least, were invincible: the Roman masses, the Roman State, and more and more, the romanised Barbarians. Why was it driven out of North Africa, nearly wholesale? Not because of the philosophical, moral or spiritual superiority of the Koran over the Gospel, but because of the fighting superiority of the warrior-like Arabs over the Christians. The three quarters of Spain were Mohammadan, at one time. Why are they not now?

Not because of the superiority, if any, of the Gospel over the Koran, but because of the greater military strength of the Catholic kings, makers of modern

Spain, compared to that of the last Mohammadan rulers; because political power remained, finally, in the hands of the Catholics. When you possess political power, then you can make nations do what you like, think what you like, profess whatever sense or nonsense you like, *nowadays* and in the future, as well as you could in the past. It only requires a more powerful administration, backed by more powerful war-engines, as all techniques improve with time.

We would like the Hindus to remember this, and to strive to acquire *political power at any cost.* Social reforms are necessary, not because they will bring more "humanity" among the Hindus, as many think, but because they will bring unity, that is to say power. The Hindus have been living, up till now, with less "humanity." Many unseen dramas, many crushed aspirations, many weary, wretched lives have been the consequence of Hindu orthodoxy, enforced in daily matters with all its rigidity. But we do not speak of them. We do not advocate in favour of the sufferers, in the name of "humanity." If, with less "humanity" the Hindu nation was growing stronger *as a nation,* instead of growing weaker everyday; if, with less "humanity," the Hindus could organise themselves, reconquer India for themselves, and make free India a ruling power in the world, then, we would never ask them to change the slightest of their habits, nor to get rid of the grossest of their superstitions, if any. If, without the collaboration of *all* Hindus, Hindudom was flourishing and able to flourish in the future, we would not even advocate the suppression of Untouchability. There is nothing so strong as deep-rooted customs. Humanitarian views have never up-

rooted them. But the pressure of a hard, undeniable necessity has, sometimes. The necessity that is pressing the Hindus, specially in the regions where they are a minority, is *to live*, first. To live, they must grow strong; *they must get political power in their hands.* We advocate social reforms, the abolition of Untouchability, liberalism in daily social matters, alliance with the sturdy Hillmen considered as Hindus (since necessary), and the recall of all Indians back to Hindudom, because we believe that these are the effective means, by which the Hindus *will get* political power, and, with it, the possibility of every kind of national glory, within India, and outside India, one day.

* * *

But the Hindus—those *who remain* in their fold, those who think that everything is well and good, and marvellously regulated by the seers of old, in Hindu society; those who perhaps will be, soon, (in places like North and East Bengal, at least) the last Indian Pagans—are not politically minded enough, or, better say, are not politically minded at all, *as Hindus.*

They may, sometimes, be religious-minded, and they are always philosophically minded. But that is not sufficient to make a *conscious* nation of them. That is not sufficient to shake off the greatest obstacle of all to Hindu enterprises: indifference, nay, inertia; the product of the combined influence of thousand years' slavery, and of India's burning climate.

It requires a tremendous dynamic uplift to remove such stagnancy as that of the Hindu society, for, as we have said, it must be removed *at once and wholesale,* at least in certain dangerously threatened regions, fear the Hindus may be swept away forever. Not slowly slowly but at once, and wholesale; for the hostile forces all around, strengthened by the very spirit of our time, by the different "democratic" propagandas which the Hindus themselves are responsible for, are rising day by day to crush the few who actually represent Hindu culture and civilisation. And history has never waited for anybody.

It is only by becoming politically minded, *and that, in the right* sense, that the Hindus can face the storm, win, and rule.

The Mohammadans, in Bengal, are strong, as Mohammadans at least, if not as Indians. They share with the Hindus the blessings of foreign domination, which are temporary, and those of a depressing climate which are permanent. Yet, they do not share their apathy. They rise like one man, whether to attack or to protest, whenever they think it necessary. They will never let anything tread upon what they call "their rights," unless it be a material force more powerful than theirs.

The difference comes from their religion, which is strongly creedal while Hinduism is not. One must admit that a man who thinks himself in possession of such absolute truth which *alone* can save his soul, is strengthened by this belief. Moreover, that man and any men who share his firm acceptance of the same faith, his allegiance to the same living God and to the

same true Prophet, are nearer to each other than any philosophers can be, who share the more or less rational acceptance of the same hypothesis, among many others; nearer to each other even than any religious minded people can be, who follow the same spiritual path *knowing that it is one among many others*. Certainly, the undiscussed belief in whatever is written in a particular book, looked upon as sacred, is most unscientific. But it makes one strong, practically. It also makes a nation strong. It promotes action, and can lead to great things. It shakes people's natural laziness, and does not allow them to remain indifferent.

The Hindus, with their manifold and apparently contradictory beliefs, with their experimental religion and their scientific out-look, can never hope to enjoy the advantages of religious fanaticism. Not that they are always faithful to their scientific attitude *in every matter*. It would be easy to prove that they are not. But they *are not* in such matters which, properly speaking, are not religious, but social; with the result that, while Mohammadan fanaticism makes the Mohammadans strong, Hindu fanaticism, if any, only makes the Hindus weak. Mohammadan fanaticism deepens the gap between the Mohammadan fold and the rest of the world, and, at the same time, it sets aside the differences, and strengthens the ties between any two Mohammadans *within* the fold. It separates the fold from all what is not it, *and unites it*, making it conscious of its existence and might, as a whole. The Hindus' position is quite different. While their total absence of religious fanaticism makes them feel themselves one with all the world, their

orthodoxy, that is to say, their *fanaticism in social matters,* keeps them aloof from one another within the Hindu fold, not allowing them *as a whole, nay as a nation*, to be conscious of their own existence.

It is not possible (nor desirable) that the Hindus should any day become fanatical in the same way as the Mohammadans. But there is no denying that they need *a wholesale change of mentality* which will give them, as a nation, all the advantages that the Mohammadans draw from religious fanaticism; a change of mentality which will, on one hand, separate them from the rest of the world, give them self-consciousness and self-pride as a *distinct* body, and on the other, set aside all what makes one Hindu feel different from another Hindu, all what keeps them aloof from each other and indifferent to each other's interests, to each other's grievances, to each other's sufferings, within the Hindu fold; which will, in one word, *unite them.*

*It is that change of mentality which is the important thing,* because all resistance to hostile forces from outside, as well as all constructive work within Hindudom, depends upon it.

* * *

The way leading Hindudom to freedom, strength and greatness, can be pointed out in one word;

(1) Cultivation of *predominant Hindu nationalism* in each individual Hindu;

(2) Cultivation of strength, and of a spirit of *organised resistance* to aggression, throughout Hindudom.

* * *

Lack of nationalism is the great curse of India.

The Musulmans, who represent more than one fifth of the total population of India, feel themselves Musulmans and do not feel themselves Indians. At the most, some of them (a few) may feel themselves Indians to a certain extent. But they are Musulmans *first*. None are *Indians first, and then Musulmans* proved that Islam does not prevent their free self-assertion as Indians. None are Indians and Musulmans in the same way as a Frenchman, or an Italian, is French and Christian, or Italian and Christian, that is to say: French *first*, Italian *first*, and Christian as long as Christianity is no actual bar to the expression of his patriotism.

Among the Hindus, the immense majority have a deep-rooted caste-consciousness with a vague consciousness of Hindudom, and no Indian consciousness at all. An illiterate Hindu (a porter in the station, a peasant or a fisherman in the village) does not know what a map of India looks like. Nor has he any idea of an Indian *nation* whose glory *he* shares, whose tradition he continues, whose past, present and future *are his for the sole reason that he is a Hindu*. To be a Hindu, for him, means to observe certain social customs (to not interdine with certain people, etc ) and to take part in certain festivities on certain occasions (to gather, for instance, on such and such a full-moon night, and beat drums together, in singing God's name). He knows that there are people living in remote provinces who worship the same Gods, hold sacred the same holy places and rivers,

and observe the same festival days as himself. All those people are Hindus; they and he share the same civilisation. He feels that, but dimly. There are so many restrictions, so many barriers between him and them, that his idea of Hindudom is not even as clear as the idea of Christendom probably was to an ignorant European, during the Middle Ages; and it cannot be compared with any such thing as a national consciousness.

Of the Hindus who actually represent Hindu culture, a very few can be called Indian nationalists. Socially, they also are the members of different castes. Apart from that, they are either free thinking philosophers with a smiling universal outlook and no particular love for anything, or else, wholesale spiritual beings in love with God, or, at least, busy with the progress of their own soul towards self-knowledge, through some particular path.

And as for those Hindus who have reinvented Indian nationalism during these last decades, who have built up the Indian National Congress, who have suffered for India and put India above everything, they too often seem to forget that India, apart from Hindudom, is no India at all. They, too often, are nationalists *inspite* of being Hindus, *not because they are Hindus;* nationalists just as so many European Christians are inspite of being Christians.

But Christianity, we have said, as well as Islam, is essentially international. A Christian *cannot* be a true nationalist except inspite of his Christianity. While a *Hindu can; while a Hindu should be an Indian nationalist because he is a Hindu;* because Hindu art, culture, life, and every kind of Hindu glory

are India's, and India's alone; and because the purest expression of Indian nationalism, the devotional cult of Bharat Mata (Mother India) can find place nowhere, can grow nowhere, can nowhere become prominent, except within Hindudom.

* * *

Musulmans are Musulmans *first*, and may sometimes be Indians *afterwards*, proves that India's interest does not come to a clash with that of Islam.

And the few conscious Hindus are either modern European-style Indian nationalists (who separate Church and State) or else, philosophers first, and Indians afterwards; spiritual beings first, and Indians afterwards; devotees of such and such a God, disciples of such and such a "guru,"—sympathisers of such and such a religious movement ... *first*,—and Indians afterwards.

Go and speak to many average educated Hindus about the social reforms needed for the defence of Hindudom. They will tell you that the important thing is to purify one's soul; all progress in social life comes afterwards, by itself. Take, for instance, the case of all those who follow the same course of spiritual training as the man who is speaking to you, of all those who are connected with the same "math" or the same "asram" as him, and who regularly pay their respects to the same "guru." There are no caste distinctions among them, will he tell you. Take the case of all those who frequent such and such a "sarvajanin" temple, built by so and so, for the good of all Hindus. They eat together the offerings set before

the God. They form a happy brotherhood. If all Hindus follow their example, then, no doubt, Hindudom will flourish forever and ever, united and strong, and full of faith. Another will say: follow the example of the Vaishnavas, and let all the Hindus actually become one huge brotherhood praising the name of Hari, Love incarnate. Another will say something else. None seem to be perfectly consistent with the true scientific Hindu attitude in religious matters, and to consider religion as an affair of purely personal experience, left to personal choice. And if there be any who do, then they seldom believe in social reforms; they have higher things to think of.

* * *

The truth is that the unity of Hindudom, if ever it has to come, is not coming through reverence payed to the same "guru," not through praise of the same divine name, nor through partaking of food from the offerings set before the same God, by all the Hindus. First, these doings would be the exterior signs of a sort of *creedal unity,* and creedal unity of such a religious system as Hinduism, whose very essence is free experimental research in religious matters, is the greatest impossibility one can think of. Never the Hindus will be, like the Christians or like the Musulmans, the believers in one and the same creed. Their spirit is much too free, and their culture too old. But, besides that, it is too late to dream of any sort of unity realised through religious gatherings; the experiment has been attempted long ago, and without sufficient success.

For centuries, the Hindus of all castes and all provinces partake the same sacred meals, in Jagannath's temple, at Puri. But as soon as they have crossed the temple gates, they are as caste-prejudiced, as provincial-minded, and as divided in every possible way as before. And what about the unifying effect of the holy name of Hari? Nowhere in India have these blessed syllables been more often and more devoutly pronounced than in Navadwipa; nowhere have the Hindus more fervently beaten drums together, repeating the name of God in mystical frenzy; nowhere Vaishnava faith and Vaishnava love have been more flourishing than in that birthplace of Vaishnavism. And yet, what is *now* the population of Nadia district, where Navadwipa stands? Five and a half lakhs of Hindus, and ... *nine and a half lakhs of Musulmans.* As if, indeed, the name of Allah and of his Prophet had more power than the name of Hari!

We may assert that they have not, and that nothing else but the social bigotry of the Hindus has driven away from their fold these nine and a half lakhs of Bengalis who have accepted Islam. We may also assert that, had there been no "sangkirtans," no "mahotsavas," no repetition of the name of Hari, no Vaishnava mysticism, then, possibly, not nine lakhs and a half only, but fourteen lakhs and a half, among the Hindus of Nadia district, would have become Mohammadans. This is conceivable, though nobody can tell what would have actually happened. We do not say that the name of Hari and "sangkirtans" and "mahotsavas" are of no use for the unification and strengthening of Hindudom; we do not say that the

experience of Hindu brotherhood, realised once in one's life, during a pilgrimage to Puri, or many times, during visits to "maths" and "asrams," is of no use. Nor do we deny the important part played, in the history of Hindu awakening in modern times, by such reformed Hindu bodies as the Brahmo Samaj, the Arya Samaj, the Ramakrishna Mission, etc.

We only say that, however useful they may have been and may be still, all these things are *not sufficient* to save Hindudom *now*. Apart from the fact that it is contrary to the spirit of Hinduism to expect all Hindus to become Vaishnavas, or Brahmos, or Arya Samajists, or anything else of the kind, the beneficient influence of such movements, aiming at the unification of the Hindus on some purely religious basis, *is too slow*. Owing to their impulse, Hindu society is undergoing a serious evolution, no doubt. But the dangers of the present day are surrounding the Hindus with an excessive rapidity. They are at hand. And it is not a "serious" *but slow* evolution that can enable the Hindus to face them and overcome them. Remember history does not wait.

* * *

The evolution of Hindu society is too slow, and the strength acquired by the Hindus *as a nation,* insignificant, *because the basis of all these movements* which we have mentioned *is purely religious.*

What is purely religious (in the sense religion means : a spiritual path) is *personal*, and also of no concern with the trifles of this material world. Hinduism may be a wonderful selection of spiritual

teachings, a complete and perfect science of spiritual life, and therefore a personal treasure for each Hindu who sincerely aspires to realise his higher self. But *Hindudom* belongs to this material world. Its existence does not depend upon religious or metaphysical "truth," but upon strength in this world—political strength, military strength, *national strength.*

That is why it is difficult to help Hindudom by trying to unite the Hindus on a purely religious basis. As soon as such an effort takes place, the tragic social and political problems of modern Hindudom lose their proper significance. The social changes which could bring unity and strength if they took place on a broad scale, remain, at most, confined to a particular place (like the temple of Jagannath) or to a particular religious sect, to a brotherhood of disciples. Or else, they are totally forgotten in favour of quarrels about the Unknown and perhaps Unknowable, which seem of much greater interest to the metaphysical-minded Hindus.

More than a hundred years ago the Brahmo Samaj, when started, suggested to the Hindus a programme of social reforms, considered as a necessity. It was, no doubt, a necessity, to prevent the fashionable Bengalis of the last century from rushing to both Christianity and European life. But it seemed a greater necessity still, to many, to make it clear that God is formless, and that it is wrong to worship Him under a multitude of forms. They, therefore, put all the stress upon this point; with the result that the social programme, the practical contribution of the Brahmo Samaj to the evolution of Hindudom, was

automatically pushed to the background. Once the controversy was risen to the metaphysical plane, it stayed there. And the main question was no longer : "How to unite the Hindus? how to bring Indian Christians and Mohammadans back to Hindudom? how to keep the remaining Hindus from becoming Christians or, Mohammadans?" but: "How to persuade all Hindus that God is formless?" that is to say: "How to make all Hindụs Brahmo Samajists?"

We have spoken of the Brahmo Samaj just as of an instance among many. In fact, any effort for the uplift of Hindudom, if based upon a particular religious or metaphysical conception of the Unknown instead of upon a practical conception of the realities of this world, leads, and is bound to lead, to the formation of *sects,* with, generally, the rising of one or two more saintly Hindu leaders to the exalted status of "avatars." But India has more than enough sects; and India is swarming with "avatars," old and new. That does not help her to become *a nation.* Nor does that prevent numbers of Hindus from becoming Mohammadans or Christians.

* * *

The great thing is to make the Hindus feel themselves not a juxtaposition of castes, nor a juxtaposition of sects, but a *nation;* to bring the idea that *they are India and that India is them* out of their subconscious mind into active consciousness; to create in them such a mentality that all what concerns the material, political, *and* cultural welfare of Hindudom, that is to say of India, will be *the main concern, in*

*each Hindu's daily thoughts and life.* And when we say: the Hindus, we mean: *all Hindus.*

This new mentality cannot grow as long as purely metaphysical considerations on one hand, and purely spiritual considerations on the other, monopolise the best of so many Hindus' energy; as long as the qualities of the Unknown appear as important as they do, even to those Hindus who are not in a position to speak of them through their own experience (and real "sadhaks" do not discuss metaphysics); as long as the preoccupation of *personal* salvation is greater, among the Hindus, than that of the freedom of Hindudom, of the strength of Hindudom, of the prosperity and glory of Hindudom *as a nation.*

It is an actual transposition of values that is needed to awaken the Hindus to the desire of life and to the acceptance of struggle in this world; to prepare them to face the crisis that is before them and to rule and be great, in the future, if only they are able to stand firm in the present. This transposition of values has two aspects:

(1) to bring the average Hindu idealism down from heaven, back to India which is part of this earth;

(2) to draw the average so-called Indian nationalism away from the imported idea of separation of "Church and State," back to the real Hindu Indian conception according to which "Church and State," cult and politics, cannot be separated.

In other words, *to make both those Hindus who are not nationalists and those Indian nationalists who do not wish to call themselves Hindus, into Hindu nationalists.*

* * *

For that, as we have said, one must, first, push at the background the idea of Hinduism considered in one of its sects, or even considered as a science of universal religious investigation. *It is that,* certainly. But it is not by bearing in mind, all the time, that "it is that," that the Hindus, as a distinct nation of broad Asia, will get strengthened.

We have recalled, among the causes of the disintegration of Pagandom in the West, the social position of the slaves and of the Barbarians in the Graeco-Roman world. There was also another cause, not social, but intellectual, and this was the cosmopolitism of the last generations of Pagan intelligentsia. While new-born anti-national Christianity was growing stronger and stronger, many were the learned and cultured Pagans who felt themselves "neither Greeks, nor Romans, but men; citizens of the Universe," that is to say: philosophers without any sort of patriotism. The efforts to stop the spreading of Christianity were undertaken by the State, and in the name of the State. But what can the State do, when national consciousness has grown weak among the most enlightened citizens? The use of that political power which the State possesses depends upon the ideas of those who compose the State. When those who had influence in the Roman world did no longer identify their Nation with its national Gods and national culture, and no longer loved the Nation as the greatest of Gods, then the Roman State itself accepted Christianity. Then, the cultured "citizens of the World" who stuck to the old

Gods because of their symbolical value, and to the old schools of thought because they were schools of human wisdom, were exiled or made to be silent.

Deep, sincere, passionate nationalism could have saved the "Ancient World" and its culture wholesale, had *nationalism* been able to thrive in Greece, in Egypt, in Asia Minor and other places, under Roman domination, and in Rome itself, when Rome had become the cosmopolitan center of a vast empire.

Nationalism *does* exist, in India, however few may be those who actually live up to its ideal. *If only it spread on a broad scale* it would save Hindudom, and make it powerful once more. But if the Hindus do not learn to identify India and Hindudom, and to look upon *India* as the embodiment of sacredness, the actually most beloved deity, the very image and expression of the greater Unknown (if any such Unknown be worshipped, and if any image of it be conceived) then, even a free "Indian" government would be incapable of saving Hindudom, wherever it is weak. For, wherever Hindudom is weak, if such a government came to existence it would not represent the Hindus.

* * *

When we speak of Hindu nationalism, we do not speak of an allegiance to India of the same nature as the allegiance of a Frenchman to France, for instance. India is not France. We neither forget that Hinduism means *a cult,* nor that there are treasures of love confining to *mysticism,* in the heart of nearly every Hindu.

We have said that no religion other than Hinduism can provide the basis of Pan-Indian nationalism. But what would be Pan-Indian nationalism risen upon that basis? It would be more than a mere civism, like that we find in Europe. It would be a *ritualistic nationalism,* comparable, to a certain extent, to that of Japan; an exterior *cult* of the traditional Gods and Goddesses of India, of the great natural Forces of which India is the play-ground (Lila kshetra) and of Mother India herself. It would also be a *devotional nationalism;* absolute, unconditioned love of each and every individual Hindu for that great Being, that Goddess India whose life and spirit are *his,* but whose existence extends far beyond his, through time and space; whose value transcends his and that of all what he can touch and see; whose glory draws him out of his personal insignificance, and magnifies him to his own eyes.

And just as the few really wise men worship God even in the humblest manifestations of life, in the same way, the millions of Hindus would see first of all a son of Mother India in one another, and treat each other likewise.

* * *

With the cultivation of sincere Hindu nationalism, many religious, social, and political superstitions, which are the greatest hindrance to Hindu unity, would disappear automatically.

Through the very fact that the Hindus, instead of subordinating nationalism to "religion" (or to moral principles, or philosophical ideologies, which comes to

the same) would subordinate "religion," morals, principles of any sort to nationalism, the condition of India would be modified. A change in action does not always, at once, bring a change of outlook. But a change of outlook is bound to bring, at once, a change in action.

So, to begin with, many of the old institutions of the Hindus that are supposed to be settled upon the authority of the "shastras" would lose their rigidity everywhere, and even disappear, wherever the interest of the Hindus, as a nation, is that, such institutions should disappear. Take the instance of caste. Nowadays, many Hindu realise that this institution should be, if not suppressed (a very few go so far) at least reformed. But it is a religious institution, for everything social, among the Hindus, is considered to have a religious basis. To alter it means to go against the authority of the Scriptures. Fortunately, the Hindu Scriptures are innumerable. So those who wish to reform the present caste system can always find some authority to justify their attempt. Some will tell you that, "in the Bhagavat Gita," caste, established upon quality distinctions, means something quite different from what we see today. Another will say that, "in the Vedas," there is no mention of caste. Another, that, "in the mind of the seers of old," caste had a purely spiritual sense. But, no less earnestly than those who support caste system as we see it, they all implicitly admit that it is some authority "of old," and not the interest of *today's* Hindu society, which has to guide the Hindus of the present day. And that, because they are "religious-minded," instead of being, first of all, *nationalists*. A

Hindu who would be first of all a lover of Hindu India would say: "It does not matter so much what is written in the Scriptures as it matters what means *we* have to use, *today,* to face the special conditions in which *we* are placed. If the written "shastras" are not able to meet *our* needs, then, we can write new shastras. But nobody will be able to build up a new Hindudom if *we* perish."

To consider the interest of one's nation *first,* means to adapt one's institutions to the necessities of time *wherever national defence is concerned.* Social institutions are instruments in the hands of a nation, for its own welfare. They were invented for the nation, not the nation for them. Old things are, no doubt, venerable, while linked with a glorious past. That does not mean that they must never be renewed, when times change. Any true Indian will look upon the sword of Rana Pratap as sacred: some of the noblest episodes of India's past are linked with it. But no sensible man would ask India to use similar swords *nowadays* to fight against war-tanks and aeroplanes. A real Hindu nationalist will look upon social institutions in the same light, wherever the interest of Hindudom is at stake.

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What we have just said about casteism can be said about excessive provincialism, this other drawback of Hindu society, resting also, to a great extent, upon the authority of *custom,* and enforced by caste restrictions themselves. If the future military unity of free India is to be prepared from today through a

growing united Hindu consciousness, then, whatever prevents the formation of that consciousness is to be opposed.

We know that, though they are intermingled most of the time, provincial feelings and caste feelings are not exactly of the same nature. At the back of provincialism there is the idea of language, which corresponds to a reality. Many Indian "provinces" could be taken as nations by themselves. But nowadays, we are witnessing every day the fact that minor nations cannot live while keeping aloof from the strong ones whose culture and civilisation they share. What is true in present-day Europe and in the Far East, is also true in the Hindu East, that is to say, in present-day India (in waiting for the time when one shall speak of Greater India, based upon a still broader consciousness of Hindudom). Hindu nationalism has first to create an all-India Hindu consciousness. And the legitimately proud provinces (as well as the legitimately proud castes) will ultimately be benefited. Now, the Hindus of North and East Bengal, who are under the threat of destruction, are not even whole-heartedly backed by the Hindus of West Bengal, who cannot feel the danger as a *personal* concern of theirs. Imagine what an enormous strength they would gain, if only they felt themselves actually backed by the Hindus of Madras, by the Hindus of Maharashtra, by the Hindus of Malabar, of Punjab, of all India.

* * *

With a true nationalist mentality, the Hindus would

no longer look down upon "number," as opposed to, "value." Everybody understands that *nowadays* perhaps more than at any stage of the past, *number means: political power*. We know that there are instances of strong modern countries, outside India, where the few are supposed to rule over the many. But the many, there, are conscious beings; how could the few, who rule over *them*, rule without their whole-hearted consent? The truth is that *always and everywhere, the many, if organised, are a strength.* The Hindu "religious" mind, to which strength in this world does not seem to be an important thing, can ignore the many, and let them become enemies of Hindudom. But the Hindu nationalist mind, to which strength in this world, political power, is the first indispensable condition to build up a great Hindu India, cannot afford to act in the same way.

A nationalist Hindu will naturally call back to Hindudom *all Indians*, whoever they may be, who can help to make Hindu India (real India) strong; who can fight to defend that priceless culture of which the purely "religious" or philosophically minded Hindus merely talk, most of times.

And moreover, the best thing to do to bring back to Hindudom *all Indians*, is not to preach Hinduism as a fine selection of philosophies appealing to all men, but *to teach all Indians to put India above everything else*, and, at the same time, *to show them* (for it is a fact) *that India does not exist apart from Hindudom.*

We do not say that, in broad Indian culture, no foreign elements should be tolerated. There *are* foreign elements in all cultures, always. Nor do we say that every Indian must fanatically refuse his

respect to all Gods and prophets of non-Indian origin. Such a narrow view would itself be anti-Indian. But we say that, *as an Indian,* he should *first* pay his respect and express his allegiance to all what, through millenniums of living legend and history, through sculpture, song and thought, has become the symbol of India herself.

Hindus have never asked anybody to renounce his personal faith, but only to renounce his exclusivism, his fanaticism in matters of personal faith or personal experience. If the Christians of India, today, following the example of the Christians of Europe, would only *put India above Christianity*; and if the Mohammadans of India, following the example of the modern Mohammadan leaders of Persia and of Turkey, would only *put India*—our common India—*above Islam*, then we would have no objection to their existence in India. They would be, then, Christians or Mohammadans as religious beings in search of their personal salvation; *but, as Indians, they would be loyal Hindus.* And they would be Indians *first*, religious beings *afterwards*. They would put the cultural as well as political interest of India above their personal salvation. They would be then an actual part of Hindudom, and it would be of no use "reconverting" them.

But this widespread national mentality is still a dream. And the aim of the movement in favour of reconversion to Hinduism is not the sporadic reconversion of half a dozen Indian Mohammadans and Christians, nor the grant of Hindu initiation to a few half-conscious hill-tribes, but the creation of a genuine national Indian consciousness, the same as

that of Hindudom, in all the Indian Mohammadans, Christians and aborigines hillmen; not the personal acceptance of any particular religious teachings by a few people, but the reconversion of the whole nation to its own national culture, consciousness, and pride.

* * *

But *how* to make people feel and think in terms of nation and national values? It is not an easy thing. "Spiritual" values which should be the concern of individuals alone, "moral" values, which are the product of the influence of ageless rules of convenience for individuals living together, play a daily part in the formation of the Indian public opinion, while national values do not. "Principles," a certain political philosophy, which is as "moral" as it is political, a certain innocent conception of international "right" and "wrong," and a still more innocent hope that "right" will win, are the things that guide the judgement of an average Hindu, about national and international daily politics. *The sole idea of India's interest* does not. The average Hindu, because of his inheritance of high "principles," along with centuries of political annihilation, is in the habit of sympathising with all the down-trodden countries of the world without trying to know if they really are, or not, as "down-trodden" as they look, and specially without troubling to understand *what Hindudom can gain* (what *India* can gain) by their not being down-trodden. Since a year or two, to talk politics with Hindus means to exchange expressions of grief in favour of the "poor" Abyssinians, the "poor" Chinese,

and above all, the "poor" Jews. (May be, also, recently, the "poor" Czechoslovakians, the "poor" Albanians, etc.) And God alone knows how many other "poor" countries will soon be added to the list.* But what about "poor" India?

Perhaps the rapid international changes taking place each day may turn to be a blessing for her, and perhaps they may not. But this is not the point. The point is that the Hindus do not care to examine this problem. Their first thought is: "right" and "wrong," not: "Hindudom's gain," and "Hindudom's loss." When they get to feel that the first thing, for them, is to live, ruling over a free, strong Hindu India (including Greater India) *and then only* to invent as many definitions as they like of right and wrong, there will be some hope for the Hindus.

*Political training* is necessary for people to think in terms of national interest.

* * *

But political training is not enough. Or, better say, political training should begin (and actually does begin, wherever it exists) long before future citizens are able to discuss what is written in the newspapers. Like all genuine education, *it begins at home, from very childhood,* and depends immensely upon the mothers of a nation.

Every great nation is a nation where the women have a strong consciousness of their country's

* The "poor" Poles still formed an independant nation when this book was written.

greatness. Take the instance of Japan or of Germany, today. Take the instance of the Rajputs, in Indian history or of the Romans, in the days of Cornelia. Great personalities too, rise to greatness with their mother's inspiration. Example: Sivaji. Lack of political training and absence of nationalism in India is partly, and perhaps mostly due to the fact that Hindu women were, for so long, kept aloof from the preoccupation of national problems.

Hindu women embody some of the finest virtues of womanhood. They are devoted wives and tender mothers, and, inspite of many unseen sufferings, there is peace in their lives, peace from within. Still more than the essential of Hindu religious traditions, which they have been transmitting to their children, for endless generations, the silent, soothing, unconscious influence of their own personality has made the Hindus seekers of peace from within. Moreover, one can say that, if Hindudom is lasting still, this fact is greatly due to the conservative tenacity of the Hindu women.

But Hindudom is lasting, not living. For it to *live* as a nation, nowadays, conservative tenacity without consciousness is not what is needed. An interior peace, however precious, is not enough, for it is personal. For a new strong nationalist mentality to grow, among the Hindus, a new nationalist atmosphere is needed, in each Hindu home.

School and college education are now being considered as more and more necessary, by the upper caste Hindu ladies living in towns, atleast in Bengal. And a spirit of so-called "imitation of the West" is consequently creeping into a section of Hindu society.

Yet, school and college education do not necessarily mean culture; and they surely do not mean nationalism, in a country where there is no national education at all. The so-called "imitation of the West" is but a bad copy of some petit aspects of a race of free men, by a batch of slaves whose mind has been made incapable of considering what essential virtues have made nations strong, in the West as well as in the East: national discipline, sense of national dignity *in each individual man or woman,* and, above all, sense of personal responsibility of each individual, man or woman, in every matter in which the nation's welfare is concerned.

Women's bookish education is useful, whenever it helps women to develop their national consciousness along with their character. When it does not, then it is but an ornament of the mind, and, half the time, an ornament out of place—an ornament of bad taste. What we want, in Hindu women, is strength of character (their submissive attitude is too often a result of weakness) and national consciousness, *national pride.*

* * *

In the West (we mean, in Europe) little children are taught to take interest in their nation's greatness. Little French boys, little Germans, little Greeks, put their toy-soldiers in a row, and make them fight. One square-yard of a rotten carpet becomes a battlefield, where two nations are competing for supremacy. If the four-year-old child, the owner of the toy-soldiers, be a French boy, then the French batch always wins.

If he be a German, then the German batch is always the strongest. If he be a Greek, then he plays "Greeks and Turks," and always gives the Greeks the advantage.

There were nations under foreign domination, in Europe: the Balkans, for instance, which were under the Turks for long centuries. During the days of Turkish rule, the children of the Balkans used to learn patriotism in their mother's lap. The mothers were mostly illiterate (as millions of Indian women are nowadays) but they knew enough to tell their children that their country was in bondage and that it had to be made free. They used to teach them to feel slavery intolerable and to firmly and constantly keep in their hearts the *will of freedom*. They had the sense of "nation" and of national pride.

It is that which we would like to see also in Hindu women. We would like to see four-year-old little Indians playing "Indians and Mlechhas" with two batches of toy-soldiers (never mind if the game corresponds to a present possibility or not) and those who go to school showing each other, on the map, what they would like Greater India to be, one day (never mind when). India's freedom will not be far away when every Hindu actually feels slavery intolerable, that is to say, first, when every Hindu mother does. And India will grow to be a great world Power when, in every Hindu home, mothers and children discuss not merely how to be "good" according to current social standards, but how to be strong, how to rebecome a great nation. To rule, one day, it is not sufficient to be "good."

We would like to see the Hindu women get into the

habit of discussing among themselves, and within their family circle, with *earnestness*, any matter concerning the nation, when it comes to their knowledge; not necessarily politics, but social matters, social problems, in the light of individual cases, which are the tragic realities of every day.

For instance, in Hindu public meetings, the fact is often recalled of the number of Hindu girls and women driven away from their society by Mohammadans. There are rowdy protestations against these daily outrages. There are rowdy protestations against many sorts of "Mohammadan injustice," Mohammadan tyranny," etc. in Hindu public meetings, letting aside those, against every new legislative reform which favours the Mohammadans, in a province where the Mohammadans are in power. All these protestations are of no use. The new legislative bills are passed, inspite of what the Hindus may say, because what the Hindus may say is mere talk as long as they cannot *do* anything to back it; as long as they are *weak*. "Mohammadan tyranny" continues, unchecked; and so does the abduction of Hindu girls and women. For "Mohammadan tyranny" means: Hindus' weakness. And insult to Hindu women means: Hindus' weakness. There is no liberty, no justice, no honour, no religion for the weak.

We would like the Hindus to realise it, and *to react*.

We would like, first of all, the Hindu women at home *to feel* personally insulted, whenever they come to know of any action that is an insult, not merely to such or such a person, or to such or such a family, but

*to the Hindus* as a whole. They should feel ashamed; they should feel indignant; they should promote to action their husbands, their brothers, their sons; at-least ask them: "What can be done?"; repeat to them that "something must be done."

When they come to know that, in their own province, Hindudom is put to some new humiliation, then, we would like to see them *express* their grief in some tangible way (by fasting, for instance, a whole day, from sunrise to sunset). This would help *them* and all their family to feel that, to be a Hindu, does not mean merely to observe certain customs concerning diet and marriage, and to perform certain rites, but also to be *one* with a whole nation, to whom they belong. And *that feeling* of the women and children, if earnest and deep in *every Hindu home* (not in public meetings) would transform the Hindus out and out. Out of harmless sheep boasting of the inheritance of an old race of lions, it would remake them lions.

Last, but not least, we would like to see both *ritualistic and devotional* nationalism, of which we have spoken, flourishing *from today among the women and children, in the Hindu home*. We were told that in Maharashtra, the image of Sivaji, the national hero, is honoured and worshipped, along with those of the Gods, in the daily family "puja." Sivaji *is* a God, since he represents Maharashtra, Hindudom—eternal India. We would like this cult of the heroes of Indian history to spread in every province, as well as in Maharashtra. We would like the Hindu women (specially those who enjoy the advantages of literacy) to become more and more

interested in Indian history, as they are in remote Indian legend; to consider it as *their own history*; to gather their children, now and then, and tell them true stories out of it, as beautiful as any tales of Gods and Demons: the story of the great king Chandra Gupta or the story of Prithviraj, the gallant Hindu knight; of Pratapaditya, or Rana Pratap, of Sivaji; of queen Padmini, of queen Durgavati, or of Lakshmi Bai. We would like to see the map of India, and beyond it, the outlines of Greater India (the picture of Hindu might in the past, and the constant recall of Hindu hopes) set as an object of cult, along with the images of the national Gods and Heroes, in every Hindu home. We would like every Hindu little boy to revere some great Indian warrior as his personal model, and every Hindu little girl to say to her mother: "I want to be like Lakshmi Bai, when I grow up."

*Then*, Hindu India would be a strength, that is to say, a reality.

Chapter 7

# A Change of Mentality Among the Hindus

## PREPARATION FOR RESISTANCE

It becomes more and more clear that what the Hindus need, specially in the regions where they are a numerical minority, is to recover, along with their national consciousness, their *military virtues* of old; to rebecome *a military race.*

It is useless to try to analyse how and why the Hindus have become the strengthless flock which they presently are. And it is not only useless, but harmful to put stress upon their present weakness without pointing out what should be done to regain vitality and power. Mere stress upon a nation's weakness only makes it weaker and weaker, through the consciousness of its desperate position.

What must be first got rid of is that idea (as common, it seems, in India, among the Hindus, as in the West, among those who know nothing about India) that Hinduism is a religion of the meek and mild, which exalts passive forbearance as the greatest of virtues.

The present-day Hindus, as a result of centuries of humiliation, have formed the idea that there is

nothing else to do but to "grin and bear." And long-suffering has become among them a wide-spread "virtue." To put up with, to tolerate, to excuse, is considered as a sign of self-control (that is to say, of strength) and admired, while in reality it is, half the time, a sign of incapacity to face the cause of one's sufferings, and check it—a sign of weakness. One puts up with everything, in Hindusthan: with the neighbours' noise, with the dirt of the streets, and other such ordinary inconveniences, ... and, ultimately, with "Mohammadan tyranny" and with foreign domination. Having learnt from generation to generation, that it is a "virtue" to tolerate others, one makes up his mind not to say a word, and the evil remains. At end, one does not even feel disturbed. Uncongenial material conditions of life, absence of elementary comforts, etc., should not be taken into consideration by "spiritual" people, whose "strength of mind" is enough to overcome any such unpleasant things. But the Hindus are, in fact, far from being as "spiritual" as they think themselves, and specially as interested foreigners cleverly incite them to think. So, material conditions *have* an effect upon their lives. The absence of comfort *does* depress them; and the absence of a suitable atmosphere in which they could develop themselves, physically and intellectually, *does* keep them backward as a race.

We have said that the finest human beings are to be found among the Hindus, and we believe it is true. The genuine aristocracy of India is the aristocracy of the world. But what about the rest of Hindudom? Compare the down-trodden Hindu masses, who have forgotten everything of the teachings of Hinduism

except that long-suffering is a virtue, with the self-asserting, national-minded masses of other countries. Compare a Hindu coolie with an English or a French coolie. While these are free citizens, well knowing that the strength of their country is *theirs*, and always ready to claim, their place in the country, their right to live, their right to rise above their condition, individually, if worthy, the Hindu has the inborn fear and humbleness of a beaten dog. *As a man*, he may be better than a European. There may be endless possibilities in him. But these possibilities, if any, are denied, crushed, annihilated by the lie which he and nearly all Hindudom believe implicitly: "Put up with your condition; tolerate other people's injustice; suffer silently: it is a virtue."

* * *

Long suffering may be, in certain cases, a sign of "strength of mind" in an individual. But a race, a nation to which long-suffering is taught, can never be great. You may speak of long-suffering "in daily life," but it is all the same. There is no definite landmark between the things that concern daily life, and those that are of higher interest. To put up with wretched conditions in daily life leads one to put up with no less wretched conditions in national life. Everything is but a matter of habit, and the very doctrine of forbearance is a depressing one, a philosophy for slaves.

That is why, we suppose, Christian-like Hinduism is so popular among the so-called "friends" of India who come from Western countries. Whether British,

American, or anything else, these people mostly belong to ruling races, unless they are Jews. They come out here, adopt a few easily adoptable Hindu manners, and go about praising Hinduism for its "cosmopolitan" outlook, for its "non-violent" ideal, for its "spirituality", and for all the Christian virtues that Europe had to reject to become strong. But what is good for Europe is not necessarily good for India. Europe and India are so different! Europe was made to rule, to get rich, and to enjoy the world; India was made to be ruled over, to be robbed of her wealth, and to show the world that wealth and power have no value; to embody universal love and unlimited forbearance, offering the left cheek when slapped upon the right; to be, if not officially, at least in spirit, *the* typical Christian nation. Is it not?

The Europeans are the last people to discourage the aptitudes of the Hindus for such a destiny. And those who are in love with Christian-like Hinduism are surely the most effective missionaries that "Christian power" has ever had in India. If they are willfully deceiving the Hindus for political purposes, then one must praise their cunningness, and the originality of their method of deceit. If they are sincere, they are still more dangerous; for then, it is *not they* who have come over, but the sub-conscious self-defence instinct of their race which has *sent them* over to India, so that the "white man" may keep on carrying his "burden" there, for a few years more at least, without being disturbed. If they are Jews, the origin of their slavish virtues is not difficult to trace, and their message of peace not difficult to understand.

Unfortunately, all these "friends" and admirers of a distorted Hinduism enjoy a great credit among the Hindus. And how could it be otherwise? The Hindus themselves have become Christianised, in practical matters, if not in their metaphysical outlook. They have become domesticated.

* * *

One will never preach enough, nowadays, that Hinduism *is not* a religion of the weak, nor of the sick, nor of the slaves. The national cult of India is a cult of strength and youth, the cult of the fair Aryan warriors, worshippers of Dawn, who settled in India ages ago.

One will never say enough, never do enough to revive in present-day India the love of bold adventures, along with the spirit of self-assertion; the will to live, not a weary scanty life, but a beautiful one; the will to enjoy all what is enjoyable on earth: wealth, pleasure, power; the will to create; and the will *to resist*, to overcome, and to crush mercilessly any force that opposes itself to Hindu self-assertion and creation.

When the Hindus recover their glory and actually *get* wealth and power as a nation, then, if some of them like, they can renounce these things, as the Pandavas did their reconquered throne. *But not now.* (The Pandavas did not renounce their throne before reconquering it.) *Now*, the whole nation's preoccupation should be, not renunciation of the world and its vanity, but: "How to live and enjoy the world, as other great nations do?"; not: "How to go to

heaven"? But: "How to make India, his motherland, actually 'more exalted than heaven,'* to every Hindu;" not: "How to bear silently?" How to tolerate? etc., but: "*How to resist* any force that keeps the Hindus from expressing themselves."

It is astonishing that with such examples in their mind as that of the warriors in the Hindu Epics; with such Gods as the Krishna of Kurukshetra, or as Siva, the Victor of Death (Mrityunjaya), the Hindus have become a race of people so full of fear. Never has it become more necessary to popularise among the Hindu masses, as broadly as possible, some of the essential teachings of the Ramayana and Mahabharata, some of the most uplifting stories of the Gods and, as a rule, all what, in Hindu legend, history and religion, can awaken in man his instinctive warrior-like virtues.

But this is not to be achieved by mere preaching. Preaching alone has never achieved anything; if there be any latent feeling, it can only bring it to consciousness. National consciousness, and the will to *resist* are what we would like to see the Hindus cultivate.

Will to resist does not appear as long as people are sure that there is no danger. And the Hindus, nearly everywhere, enjoy such a feeling of false security. There is *now* an organised government (whether foreign or not, that is not the question) and a well-trained police to protect everybody. The streets are quiet. Riots do not occur every day in the same place;

* " জননী জন্মভূমিশ্চ স্বর্গাদপি গরীয়সী, " say the Hindus.

and riots that one reads about in the newspapers are not the same thing as riots around one's own house. More Hindus are, everyday, becoming Mohammadans or Christians. But they are inhabitants of remote villages, or people with whom one is out of touch, even while living in the same town. One does not hear of them. Everyday, there are new laws and regulations made to curtail the legitimate advantages that the Hindus were formerly enjoying, and, economically as well as politically, Mohammadan competition is growing stronger and stronger. Everyday, the Hindus are put to some new trouble, with regard either to some religious performance of theirs (such as the immersion of a holy image) or to the percentage of jobs they will be allowed to get in public services, or to something else. But life goes on . If a Hindu cannot get any work, he will live upon his brother's income. If his brother's income is next to nothing, then, they will both live miserably, with their family. *They will put up with it* (long-suffering is a virtue) and they will feel in safety, as long as there be no violent disturbance within their immediate surroundings.

But when violent disturbance comes, it may be too late to think of what to do. In Bengal at least, in most riots, two hundred Hindus are scattered by twenty Mohammadans. Why? *For the sole reason that they are unprepared*. If you ask them, when the riot is over, how it is that they did not offer the slightest resistance, they will tell you, most earnestly: "We did not know there was going to be a riot. *Here*, there had never been any yet." Certainly not. But *elsewhere* there had been many; the Hindus should never

consider a riot as impossible, in any place where they are not themselves an overwhelming numerical majority not merely in the town, but in the whole province.

And even then, ... who can tell? There have been riots in Benares.

* * *

The thing is that, as long as they entertain the idea of an organised government, with police and military force at hand to protect their life and property in case of need, the Hindus, never mind how miserable may be their condition, will feel secure. *That idea* should be got rid of.

In fact, it is a false idea—an illusion. For if, in ordinary peaceful times, the government can give a certain amount of security to each citizen, there are circumstances where it cannot; there are troubled times where no protection is available. The Hindus should remember that *their* fate is not the main concern of the present government. If there be any trouble, it is to protect the Treasury, the Imperial Bank and other such public buildings, that armed force would be sent *first*; then, it would be sent to protect the life and property of the Europeans, specially of the officials. If there be time, and force to spare, then only, half a dozen policemen might be sent to protect the Hindus. *But that would not be sufficient.* That has *never been* sufficient, in any case of widespread rioting in the recent past, where the Hindus have always been the sufferers.

Moreover, we have said, if India becomes one day an independent country (as we all hope), it may not be without passing through a more or less long period of confusion, in which there would be *no government at all* worth mentioning. Nobody knows *when* such a time may come. It does not depend upon India's will alone, but also upon international circumstances out of India's control. Whenever it *comes*, what will the Hindus do if they are not prepared *from now* to meet, with organised resistance, any threat whatsoever? If, *from now*, the consciousness of possible danger does not shake their inertia?

The widespread feeling of false security should give place, among the Hindus, to the preoccupation of *self-defence*. Even in untroubled times, the sense of self-defence is not to be done away with. The right of self-defence is a birth-right of man acknowledged by every government, for the reason that no government, however strong, can give full and entire guarantee of protection, to each and every citizen. If such guarantee were conferred, then government would give damages to people who have been robbed or injured. Therefore, to exercise one's right of self-defence, and, first of all, *to be prepared* in view of self-defence, is nothing illegal under any government. In India, a European, although in fact he is quite safe, seldom goes out alone, unarmed. But generally a Hindu, when he goes out, does not even think of taking a stick. In the places where the Hindus are only fifteen, ten, or even five percent of the total population; in the very places where riots have occurred, a Hindu walks about with nothing in his

hand, except, perhaps a book, a newspaper, or one end of his "dhoti."

* * *

But consciousness of danger alone will not make the Hindus strong, unless there is something practical done to face the eventual danger. And this is the task of the *young* Hindus.

It is the task of every Hindu to contribute his best to the organisation of his fold. But the forces threatening them from every direction are so powerful that the Hindus, in all parts of India where they are a numerical minority, *cannot survive unless they become, rapidly, a wholesale military race* comparable to what the Sikhs were in Panjab, during the days of Guru Govind Singh. And it is the young men who first become soldiers, everywhere. The very ideas of *danger* and of *resistance* are welcomed by youth. To youth, these ideas are strength-giving.

That is why the first part of the constructive programme before the Hindus should be *the organisation of the young men,** in pledge-bound military-like batches, with Hindu nationalism as their only ideal, with the cult of all what, in Hindu legend and history, can exalt strength, and with, as a rule of action, the determination to resist any attack, by all means and at any cost.

* All what, in these pages, concerns the organisation of Hindu youth, represents the views of Srimat Swami Satyananda, President of the Hindu Mission, Calcutta.

The pledge of each member of this Hindu militia is suggested by all what we have already said, concerning the defence of Hindudom. Among other things, each one would have to take an oath, saying:

(1) That he puts the welfare of Hindudom above his personal welfare; the interest of Hindudom above his personal interest; *the salvation of Hindudom, and the freedom and greatness of India above his personal salvation.*

(2) That he will treat *any Hindu* just as he would a man of his own caste.

(3) That he considers himself, and himself alone, responsible for his own personal defence; that he also holds himself responsible for the defence of his family, for the defence of the Hindus of his village or of his town, for the defence of the Hindus of his province and of all over Hindusthan.

(4) That he will obey his leader without arguing, and do whatever he is told.

Wherever a few such volunteers can be gathered, whether it be within the compound of a temple, or in some grove, regarded as sacred, a unit of the Hindu militia should be started. We suggest the compound of a temple or a sacred grove as a gathering place, so that the very surroundings may constantly remind the members of the batch of the beloved culture for the defence of which they stand. Wherever there is a strong non-Hindu majority, naturally, the Students of Resistance will not take long to be suspected. It would be wise, for them, to keep among themselves, and, at the same time, to do nothing which can be, presently, judged "unlawful." In Assam, wherever similar batches of Hindu young men have been organised by

the Hindu Mission, they have been started as branches of a "Physical Culture Association." And the name is perfectly justified, as physical training (exercises to strengthen the muscles, games, etc. and exercises in the use of knives, daggers and ordinary sticks, for self-defence) is the main thing which the young men are given, in each batch.

The main thing which is given ... *apparently;* for the young Hindus receive, in fact, much more. They are trained in a new mentality: in *nationalism,* and in *the spirit of self-defence;* they are made to think of *resistance* as the main necessity for them; they are *prepared for resistance* physically and mentally. Physical preparation is necessary, but not sufficient. Essays are given to little boys to write: "Suppose five or six dacoits attack your house at midnight. How would you defend yourselves? What would your father do? What would your mother do? What would your little sister do? *What would you do?";* Or else: "Is your house, as it is built, easy to defend in case dacoits attack it any time? Try to imagine what possible transformations would make it more easily and more effectively defendable." And by writing such essays, the boys get into the habit of thinking that danger, for the Hindus, is an everyday's concern (which *it is*, in so many places) and that *each one of them, individually, as a Hindu, must be always ready;* that *he* must know, beforehand, what *he* has to do, in case of attack, to defend himself (for there is nobody, no government, no police, to defend him) and to defend his family members, his home, ... the Hindus of his village, who are all looking to *him* for protection; that, if danger comes, he must *do* the duty

for which he was trained. They get into the habit of feeling themselves personally responsible for the defence of the whole nation, thing which the Hindus have not felt for years, at least in Bengal.

* * *

The social reforms of which we have spoken do not require to be forced upon a batch of Hindu young men trained in the art of self-defence. The fingers of the hand, which ordinarily remain separate, suddenly unite, when the hand has to give a blow. In the same way, caste-consciousness of every sort will automatically be pushed at the background, and the now divided Hindus will become *one bloc*, when the idea of *resistance* will become predominant in each one of them.

Among the Hindus, from age to age, up till the present day, many reformers, many Incarnations appeared, who tried to do away with the evils originated from caste-prejudices. They tried, ... but they could not. Ram Mohan Roy could not; Sri Gauranga could not; one of the two or three greatest of all men, Lord Buddha himself, could not. The result of their teachings has been the formation of different new *religious* sects, one after another, not the formation of a new lasting social order. But one of them *could* and *did* change, among his disciples, the very basis of Hindu society, for the sake of the defence of Hindudom *in this world*, and he is Guru Govind Singh, the one who saved the Hindus of Punjab from total extinction, two and a half centuries back. He was able to realise such a transformation

because he organised his disciples as a *military society,* of which their descendants still retain the spirit.

The social outlook of a civil population is difficult to change, while a *military population* automatically changes its outlook, while modifying its habits to suit the necessities of war. "What will 'people' think about me? What will be the reaction of my relatives?" such questions are the last ones to appear before the mind of a soldier. Military life creates a new society, with a new type of relationship, a new brotherhood: the brotherhood of those who share the same hardships and the same dangers, who obey the same orders, and fight on the same side. Wherever that sort of brotherhood comes to existence, the conventions and prejudices of civil life are forgotten. Any ideas, habits, customs, etc., which have no meaning in the life of an army in the field, which are *of no use,* are considered as superfluous; any such ideas, habits, customs, etc., which are not only useles but create inconvenience, which are a hindrance to the army's common action, are considered as a nuisance and deliberately dropped. It may be regarded, for instance, by many Hindus, *in civil life,* as a mark of piety to not interdine with people of an inferior caste. But if Hindus of ten different castes have, any day, for the purpose of their common self-defence, to come under the discipline of organised *military life, then* they certainly will not carry ten different utensils wherever they go, to cook each one's rice separately. It would be so *inconvenient* that they will not even think of it. And the idea of "sin" now attached to the partaking of the same food by Hindus of different

castes, will disappear by itself. *New life will create a new mentality.*

* * *

The aim of those who are trying, here and there, to organise batches of Hindu young men on military lines is, no doubt, to prepare a well-trained Hindu militia, ready to fight in case of need for defence. But it is still more to bring, through that undivided, national minded, self-relying, sturdy militia, *a new life and a new mentality throughout Hindudom;* to awaken the Hindus to resistance; to accustom them to disciplined action; to make them and to keep them, as a whole, *always prepared* to face any danger, *always ready*—like an army in the field.

It is natural that the military-trained Hindu boys will mark their influence, not merely upon the next generation of Hindus (that would be too late) but upon their elders of this generation and of the past one. After having learnt to march together, in a row; to eat together; to play together; to salute the flag of India together, and to obey command, they will go back to their homes. Not only will they help to organise, in every village, new units of the growing Hindu militia, but they will bring the ideal, the principles and the virtues of the Hindu militia within the Hindu family circle. They will make their brothers, sisters, fathers and mothers understand that the defence of Hindu honour, life and property, beginning with the defence of the Hindu home, is the most important thing, the most urgent necessity; that, *will of resistance* is the greatest virtue, not will

of forbearance. They will bring the members of each Hindu household to organise themselves in view *to resist* any attack, to prevent any insult, every one of them, from old man to child, being prepared before hand and *always ready* to do whatever he or she knows to be *his* or *her duty* in case of danger. They will inspire the sense of self-reliance and self-defence even to the shy Hindu girls and women, now afraid to go from one room to the other, alone, in the dark; make every Hindu house a little fort, and the Hindus of every village a battalion of camping soldiers. *They will make the whole Hindu civil population a permanent militia.* For unless *that* is achieved, there is no hope for the Hindus, wherever they are a minority. And, in such regions as North and East Bengal, that has to be achieved *without delay;* it is, for the Hindus, a question of life or death.

* * *

By such a transformation of their life and mentality, the Hindus would acquire the two sources of strength of which the absence has been, and is still, the cause of all their disasters: *preparedness* and *unity*. Preparedness depends upon the consciousness of what the actual danger *is*, along with a proper military training. Unity depends upon the capacity of the Hindus to do away with all what keeps them from feeling themselves *one bloc*, specially with the rigidity of caste rules, on one hand, and with excessive provincialism, on the other.

Just as, through daily contact with a widespread young Hindu militia, the whole Hindu population

could not but be awakened to the sense of danger and to the necessity of being ready to face it, so it also could not but become more united. To become militarised means to become united. The parents, relatives, friends and acquaintances of each member of the Hindu militia, when they once let their lives be influenced by its spirit, would become new men and new women. When they get to think in terms of self-defence and of national defence (feeling the whole of Hindudom as one nation, and their non-Hindu brethren themselves as Hindus who have forgotten that they are Hindus) then their habits would change, without them even troubling to change them; their scale of values would be a different one. And, any social custom that is a hindrance to the organisation and defence of the Hindus, as well as to the acceptance, by them, as *one of theirs,* of any Indian who wishes to share once more, with them, the only real Indian culture and civilisation, would be rapidly looked upon as an inconvenience, and would die out by itself, as among the young Hindu pioneers.

*Rapidly,* we say, ... if Hindu society can rapidly imbibe a military spirit, considering self-defence as its first necessity.

Most ordinary, insignificant customs, we know, are not easy to change, not to speak of those which are believed to be sanctioned by religion. But there are cases, in daily Indian life, in which *even these* are set aside with bewildering rapidity. Take, for instance, the case of a Hindu whose son has just received a scholarship to go and continue his studies in England. It is amazing how quickly the orthodox father can, *then*, set aside his orthodoxy, and send the boy off to

Bombay. From the very moment the young man will take his place on board the boat, it will be impossible for him to stick to his rules of life. He will, no doubt, not touch beef; but who can tell how many times beef has been served in the plates and dishes that he will have to use, wherever he goes? Still, the orthodox Hindu father sends him, for he considers it a matter of great interest, a *necessity*.

The Hindus will do away with all what is bar to united disciplined action and a hindrance to their own national defence, when *widespread military habits create among them a widespread military outlook;* when national defence (beginning with self-defence) becomes, to their eyes, the highest of duties, and united action *a necessity*. *Then* (and not before) will Hindudom be in a position to live, and take in hand its own destiny as well as the destiny of India, even in the regions where it represents, now, a numerical minority.

* * *

Now, when riots occur, often half a dozen sturdy Mohammadans, armed with sticks and stones, disperse a procession of hundred Hindus. A numerical minority, if armed and prepared, can easily overcome an unarmed and unprepared crowd. The Hindus are unarmed *because* they are unprepared, unaware of eventual danger. Nobody prevents them from using, when attacked, the very same weapons as their opponents: sticks and stones. (At present, nobody *can* use machine-guns, in India, except the British forces. Hindus and non-Hindus are equal, in that respect.) It

is not arms and ammunitions, but *unity* and *preparedness, military spirit,* which is lacking among the Hindus, wherever they come to a clash with such agressors who also possess no arms worth speaking of. Number itself is a force, when readiness and unity go with it; not otherwise.

If only the Hindus, wherever a minority, would become a minority of soldiers, well-trained and always ready, then, not only could they defend themselves and survive, but, a time is coming when *they would be the actual masters of the situation.*

We have spoken of a period of confusion (possibly coming, sooner or later) during which no effective government may remain, in India, for a time, no one can tell.

The Hindus, then, even in North and East Bengal, and other such places where they are now a hopeless minority, would be *the* masters of India, if organised and ready. For then, while there may be no police, *they* would act as a police force: they would keep peace and order throughout the country; and the leaders of the Hindu militia would be, practically, the only government existing. What would happen *afterwards,* it is difficult to say, now. But one can hope, at least, that a whole nation who, in a short time, would have risen from the state of a helpless flock to the military virtues which we have tried to suggest, would not be easily subdued.

The vitality, the power, the pride acquired by the Hindus after such an experience, would be beyond conception. Not only the Indian Mohammadans and Christians, themselves protected by the Hindu militia during the unsettled transitory period, would

probably rejoin the Hindu fold in numbers, as religious fanaticism would rapidly give place to real Indian nationalism, when one would *see* what Indian nationalism can do, but the *world at large would respect the strong regenerated Hindu nation.*

And there would be nothing astonishing if *such* Hindus, enjoying complete independence, become conquerors, and rebuild Greater India. There would be nothing astonishing even if, through them, one day (through their direct or indirect influence) the dream of the resurrection of Aryan Pagandom in the West also, which now seems impossible, becomes a reality.

Nobody knows what *can* happen, what *might* happen. And all hopes are natural to a young nation, *if it be strong.*

Through the organisation of Hindudom, *first let us make real India strong again.*